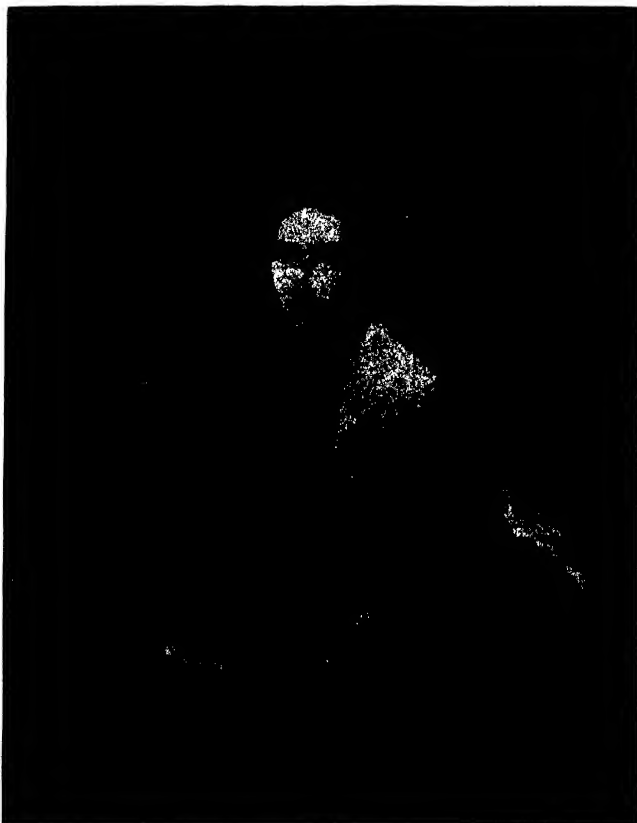


BELOVED MARIAN

By the same Author :

MY GARDEN IN THE WILDERNESS
LETTERS FROM THE WILDERNESS



MRS. IMHOFF AND CHILD
(by R. E. Pine)

BELOVED MARIAN

*The Social History of Mr.
and Mrs. Warren Hastings*

By
K. L. MURRAY

With 13 Illustrations

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

MY interest in Marian Hastings dates back to those Calcutta days when I frequently stayed, as a guest, in the house which once was hers—now 7 Hastings Street. Any unaccustomed night sounds in that house were attributed to “the Baroness walking again.” For she was reputed to haunt those lofty echoing rooms.

Marian's ghost haunted me for many years, until her story became something of an obsession. One should not write until the heart has disciplined itself to the demands of the pen. Yet one wonders how many biographies would be written if the author waited until all passion was spent and all prejudice chilled by logic. I cannot pretend to have approached Marian Hastings in anything but a somewhat perfunctory manner. I have not been able to obtain a microscopic view of her character. But I offer my own prejudices and sympathies supplemented by as much as is known concerning this elusive lady. Having wrested some records from the past I felt that the best—and the kindest—thing I could do was to commit them to print. Otherwise I might have continued, in my enthusiasm, to bore my friends to extinction.

I gladly tender my grateful thanks to those who have kindly helped me in my search, and placed my feet on the right path. To the Revd. W. K.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Firminger, D.D. ; Sir Arthur Knapp, K.C.I.E. ; Miss Janet Blunt of Adderley Manor (to whom I owe the portraits of Sir Charles Imhoff and his wife) ; Mrs. Hastings Rainford (who permits me to reproduce the Cosway miniature of Mrs. Hastings) ; Major H. Bullock ("Hyderabad") ; Mrs. Delahay (for permission to use the portrait of Warren Hastings painted by Baron Imhoff) ; the officials of the Victoria Memorial Hall, Calcutta, and the courteous and helpful librarians and other officials of the India Office and the British Museum.

K. L. MURRAY.

LONDON, W.9.

January, 1938.

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CHAPTER I

ONE fine spring day in the year 1769 the East Indiaman *Duke of Grafton* cast her moorings in the Downs and set sail for the coast of Coromandel. She was regarded as one of the faster vessels of the Company's fleet, and it was reckoned that, given fair weather, she would make her destination in something over five months. She carried some thirty passengers and a cargo of watches, clocks, saddlery and French wines.

The majority of the passengers were writers and cadets in the service of the East India Company, all of them fired with the hope of making a swift and easy fortune in the land of mosques and mysteries. Their salaries were miserable, ranging in many cases from fifteen pounds a year. But before them lay the glorious example of young Robert Clive, who had also gone out to an office stool and was now the idol and admiration of the nation, living in Berkeley Square, and decking his wife with splendid jewels. The time had not yet come to question his probity, to criticise his actions, and to hound him to depression and death. What, thought these young men, did salaries matter compared to the golden opportunities ahead? So, hopeful and alert, they set out their claret, of which each gentleman brought his own supply, produced their snuff-boxes, and surveyed their fellow-passengers. Among these was a man whose history, had they but known

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it, would have chilled some, although the more daring might have been inspired. He was a short, slight, tired-looking man approaching middle age. His manners were courteous but cold, and his coats, at a time when men vied with women in the splendour of their attire, were noticeably plainly cut. In the passenger list this gentleman was entered simply as Warren Hastings, Esquire, Deputy-Governor of Fort St. George. Resplendent in their new outfits, the younger men glanced a trifle contemptuously across the dining-table at the quiet man in the brown coat. But Mr. Hastings appeared to be absorbed in his own affairs, or he spent most of his time in reading and pacing the deck.

Warren Hastings may well have carried a serious face on this, his second voyage to India. He had already spent strenuous and adventurous years in the service of the Company, had seen Calcutta sacked and then restored, had loved and married, and had lost both wife and children. His fate had been that of many retired men who, accustomed to the spacious life of the East, find it difficult to settle down in England. Such men came back from India with a taste for luxury and a decided prestige. They had known the sweets as well as the anxieties of administration, and often found themselves unknown, unheeded and unhonoured in a changing England. The spoils of the East were quickly absorbed by the heavy demands made upon them by the high standard of social life in England. Hastings had been even less fortunate than the rest. He had married young, and was a widower at thirty.

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Hastings found little in common with his youthful fellow-passengers. The memory of his first, hopeful voyage had by now acquired a tragic significance. He, too, had entertained those high hopes when, as a boy of seventeen, he had looked to the East as the Mecca of his dreams. At thirty-seven he felt too old and disillusioned to enjoy the frothy chatter of the schoolboy clerks. He had meant to spend the long days of the voyage in studying Persian literature, which he regarded as part of every gentleman's education. But plans, carefully laid on shore, are not infrequently upset on board ship.

* * *

Apart from the maid-servants, Rose and Sukey, there were only two women travelling on the *Duke of Grafton*. One of these was the Baroness Imhoff, with her husband and a child of three years old. The other was a young woman who called herself Mrs. Thompson, of whom more was to be heard.

The Baron, a member of an old but impoverished Nürnberg family, had been appointed to a cadetship in the Company's Army at Madras. There seems little doubt that, as the Imhoffs were very poor, they had decided to drop their title while the Baron was on military service. They were entered in the passenger-list as Mr. and Mrs. Imhoff. For all their poverty, they occupied the state cabin, immediately below the round-house in which Hastings was lodged. This round-house was only occasionally allotted to male passengers, never to females, as it was frequently necessary for the

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ship's officers to enter it. But here, one morning, appeared a lovely young woman, a vision of floating muslins and fluttering ribbons, with red-gold hair coiled about her head, and ringlets falling on her forehead. A defiant spirit had induced her to climb to this forbidden ground. Why, she argued characteristically, should not all the ship be free to her? The last sight she had expected was that of a serious-looking gentleman who sat there reading and wearing what was then described as a "bed-gown."

Poor Marian! Her English was imperfect, and she could only stand there blushing and swinging by its strings the wide straw hat with the blue ribbons that matched her eyes.

"I am so ver' sor-ry!" she stammered out. Although she blushed she retained her dignity.

"I am the Baroness Imhoff," she introduced herself.

"I am Warren Hastings, at your service," replied the gentleman. "I am honoured that you should desire to see my temporary quarters," he added with a half smile.

Reassured, she stayed to talk awhile. He found her accent as charming as her manners, but, precise as usual, said little. She prattled on gaily. There was something engaging about this serious-faced man with the deep eyes that held a spark of humour. He left, somehow, a sharp impression of strength and integrity.

At this time Marian Imhoff was twenty-two years of age. Yet she had been married for five years and was the mother of three children, one of whom

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had died in infancy. Historians have suggested that there was an element of mystery about her birth and her first marriage. But there is no mystery. Anna Maria Appolonia Chapuset, known during most of her life as Marian, was born in barracks at Nürnberg in the year 1747. Although her father was, at that time, a sergeant in the Imperial Service, the family of Chapuset was of noble origin.

Marian's grandfather, Baron Charles Chapuset de St. Valentin, was one of the Huguenots who fled to Germany after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Here in Berlin the former Brigadier of the King's Household Troops was thankful to earn a living as a dancing master and teacher of languages. In this manner he supported and educated a family of three sons and succeeded in placing two of them well in the world. The youngest, Johann Jacob, was Marian's father.

Johann was the black sheep of the family, a restless, unstable man. His father had wanted him to become a notary, but he fell into bad company, gave up his profession, and eventually enlisted in the Service. Here he failed to gain higher rank than sergeant. Although unlucky in most things he was fortunate in his marriage. His wife, a German lady of good birth, was as firm of purpose as he was weak. When the improvident Johann died, leaving his family in extreme poverty, this dauntless woman was not too proud to maintain them by taking in washing. Marian was then eleven years old, and her brother Charles two years

younger. The indomitable Baroness was determined to give her pretty daughter a good education and a social grooming more in accordance with her birth than her fortune. Her own thwarted ambitions seemed to be realised in the person of Marian, whose good looks were supplemented by a ready intelligence.

One summer, when Marian was sixteen, there came to Nürnberg a dashing young officer named Christof Adam Karl von Imhoff. A fine name, and one honoured in Bavaria. But the Imhoff family had little wealth on which to support the honour.

The Seven Years War was lately ended and Karl Imhoff found himself with little chance of obtaining further employment. His only talent, apart from soldiering, was a pretty taste for miniature painting. He had many relations in Nürnberg and drifted from house to house, repaying hospitality by painting the portraits of those who had entertained him.

By some chance Karl von Imhoff met with the pretty blue-eyed daughter of the late Sergeant Chapuset and at once fell in love. Love takes no heed of rank or the lack of it ; but relations, stern and cold, took other views. Karl's father, the Landsturm of Mörlich, the family estate, had never regarded portrait painting as a respectable profession for one of ancient lineage. To his chagrin he was now asked to approve an unsuitable marriage. He considered that in spite of his poverty Karl was sufficiently well born to marry into the best Nürnberg family. To marry the daughter of

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an ex-sergeant, he argued, was both a social lapse and rank bad business. Karl might plead that Marian's ancestry was noble, but to the bigoted old German Baron the flight of the Huguenots seemed very ancient history indeed.

Love prevailed ; or was it love on Karl's side and flattered vanity on Marian's ? One can imagine that the young soldier cut a romantic figure in the eyes of a girl of sixteen. They eloped, were married, and bravely set up house. Their first two children were born in Germany, but the elder died very young. Charles, the second child, accompanied them to England.

The decision of the young couple to visit England was largely determined by their acquaintance with Madame Schwellenberg, First Mistress of the Wardrobe to Queen Charlotte.

Youth takes to adventure, and Karl thought he saw a prospect of furthering his artistic career in London. In this he was not disappointed, and in the year 1768 showed a miniature at the London Society of Artists.

The Imhoff's finances during this time could not have been in a very flourishing condition. Karl's talent was not of an order to command large prices for his work, and they had few other resources. But Marian had inherited her mother's courage and determination, and these enabled her to grapple with adversity without sacrificing either beauty or charm in the process.

But, impoverished though they may have been, their friendship with Madame Schwellenberg

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ensured them some social position and a share of the gaieties of London life. Although the Court was strict and domesticated the London scene was a gay one. Vauxhall and Ranelagh were at the height of their fashionable fame, and Mrs. Cornely's rooms in Soho Square had not yet fallen into disrepute. The great David Garrick, lately returned from the Continent, was drawing his ardent admirers to Drury Lane ; and a young man named Richard Brinsley Sheridan was attempting to interest patentees of theatres in an extremely bad play called *Jupiter*, written in conjunction with an Oxford friend, Nathaniel Halhed.

All pretty women of that time aspired to have their portraits painted. The Imhoffs were evidently not in "the Reynolds set," but Marian's portrait by R. E. Pine, although the least celebrated, shows her at her best. The face, with its large heavy-lidded eyes and long but shapely nose, is intelligent rather than strictly beautiful. The wealth of auburn hair is swept about her head and towers high, and the curves of the neck and shoulders are well displayed. A chubby child seated on her lap holds a bunch of grapes greedily to his mouth. This is, presumably, Charles, the son who afterwards rose to high rank in the British Army.

In the autumn of 1768 another child was born in London and christened Julius in the Church of St. Giles in the Fields. This indicates that the Imhoffs lived in that parish, probably in the neighbourhood of Fitzroy Square, then a fashionable residential quarter.

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Madame Schwellenberg was, of course, the "German crone" of Macaulay's savage attack, who was later to lead poor Fanny Burney such a dance. She evidently had a kinder heart than that rather foolish little lady was prepared to admit. She was kindness itself to the Imhoffs, particularly to Marian, and provided her with clothes and linen for the voyage to India. It was through Madame's influence at Court that the appointment to the East was secured, and it is probable that Marian's passage as well as her outfit depended upon her friend's generosity.

The Imhoffs were obviously not destitute when they left England. They had booked the state cabin on the *Duke of Grafton* and had presumably paid the normal passage rate, no mean sum. A passage concession was granted to cadets in the service of the East India Company, of which Karl Imhoff availed himself. But this privilege did not extend to wives and families.

Passage money, if a serious problem, was not the only difficulty before the Imhoffs. There was the baby, Julius, who was not of an age to be taken to India. A Mrs. Touchet, living at Chiswick, solved their problem. She was a widow in comfortable circumstances, with a son just entered at Westminster School and a daughter a few years younger. Mrs. Touchet agreed to take charge of the child of six months, and, relieved of this anxiety, the Baroness set sail with her husband and Charles, now three years old.

To Marian Imhoff the future seemed full of

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promise. Like all the young people on the *Duke of Grafton*, her mind swirled with visions of fortune and luxury. India lay before them like a gigantic oyster waiting to be prised open. As the fair wind filled the sails men emerged from their reserve and began to speak of their half-formed hopes and secret ambitions. Almost before the ship was off Cape Finisterre Marian had confided much of her early history and her many hopes to the sympathetic widower in the round-house.

* * *

Warren Hastings, then seventeen years of age, arrived in India in 1750, covenanted to the East India Company. Placed first at a desk in the Calcutta office of the Company, he was, two years later, transferred to Cossimbazaar, then one of the most important of the trading centres and the original capital established by Job Charnock. Situated at the junction where three tributaries of the Ganges flow down to the Hooghly, Cossimbazaar is close to Murshedabad, then the seat of Ali Verdi Khan, the Suba or Viceroy of Bengal. Despite his nickname of *Mahabat Jung*, which means *Terror of War*, Ali Verdi was a mild and amiable old gentleman, a lion in the chase but a lamb in the home. He was kind to his dependents and friendly to the English, who held their trading rights by his favour.

There is no greater mistake than to imagine, as the prejudiced and uninformed too frequently do, that the early British traders in India arrogantly

assumed the attitude of conquerors. On the contrary, they begged their trading concessions—often with forehead to the ground—from the Nawabs and Indian princes, who saw clearly where their advantage lay and made their own terms. For a number of years indeed the British were not permitted to form an army in India, and we hear of a grandson of Oliver Cromwell describing himself to the Emperor Farakhshah as “the smallest particle of sand.”

Ali Verdi Khan was pleased to have the English in his territory, although he took care to extract substantial sums from them on the ground that he and his army protected them from danger and from Mahratta invasion. The British had always feared the Mahrattas.

Young Hastings' occupation of making bargains with Indian brokers was not so prosaic as it sounds. Richly laden boats went down the river to the Company's storehouses : silks and spices and shellac ; salt and cotton ; opium and hemp ; the harvest of green and fertile Bengal.

Hastings, a quiet, thoughtful youth, had leisure in which to come close to the hearts of her people, to compare their standards of honour, loyalty and rulership with his own, and as far as possible to reconcile the two. Brought into contact with the primitive mind rather than the educated, he undoubtedly absorbed some of the simple principle of the villager, the obligation to be true to his salt. No servant pilfers from his master, although he may do so from his master's friend—it is not *his* salt that has been eaten !

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The quiet life was broken by the death of Ali Verdi Khan. His grandson and successor, Mirza Muhammed, was of a different breed to the old Nawab. An idle, effete and dissipated youth, inordinately spoilt and indulged, he had always hated the English, because he jealously imagined them to be possessors of great wealth. He resolved that, when he became Suba, he would overthrow their settlement and sack their coffers. Under his title of Suraj-ud-Daulah, or *Lamp of the State*, he has gone down in history as the perpetrator of the Black Hole tragedy.

That story has been often told. Suraj-ud-Daulah's army turned first to Cossimbazaar. This fell almost without resistance, and the Company's officials, among them Hastings, were sent prisoners to Murshedabad. The army, strongly reinforced with arms and ammunition from the Company's storehouses, started on a forced march to Calcutta, hoping to arrive there before the rains broke, and the advance of the south-west monsoon would make it easier for the garrison to obtain help from the sea.

News of the advancing army had gone on to Calcutta. The Dutch at Chinsura and the French at Chandernagore were appealed to for help. Both were polite, but would have nothing to do with either invaders or invaded. Fort William was in no condition to hold out against attack or siege. Times had been so peaceful that the Company's officers had fallen out of the way of expecting either. The women and children were hurriedly placed on

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the ships in the river, the Governor, Drake, shamefully accompanying them. Under the gallant Holwell the garrison managed to hold out for three days. It fell on June 20th, 1756, a date engraved on the minds of all Englishmen ; the night of the Black Hole tragedy.

Among those who perished in that dungeon was one Captain John Buchanan, who had bravely held an outpost of the Fort long after hope of victory had gone. His wife was one of the women who escaped with two children on the ships to Fulda, a village on the banks of the Hooghly, some thirty miles below Calcutta.

The plight in which this band of refugees found themselves was pitiable. For shelter they had only the thatched mud huts of the peasants, and though the villagers did all in their power to render their condition easier it was, in the nature of things, little enough. A handful of Dutch traders showed great kindness to the sufferers, and the Dutch Governor, Adrian Bisdam, sent stores and comforts from Chinsura. But a malarious swamp in the rainy season is no place for European women and children, and what with floods and fever the death rate in that little colony was terrible.

* * *

The Nawab was not finding his triumph so sweet as he had hoped. He was disappointed in the small amount of treasure yielded by the Calcutta coffers ; his ministers were disgusted with him ; his revenues were falling, and a final blow was struck

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by the news that British ships had arrived in the Hooghly. Even then his ignorance made him incredulous of attack on the port, the name of which he had changed to Ali-nagore, or the *Port of God*.

“There are not ten thousand men in Europe !” he exclaimed contemptuously.

Warren Hastings, held prisoner at Murshedabad, had, through the intervention of the Dutch Governor, been allowed a certain degree of liberty. He had made some Indian friends and so became aware of an intrigue to unseat Suraj-ud-Daulah. It was Mir Jaffir, uncle to the Nawab and Commander-in-Chief of his army, who led the conspiracy against him. Clever, wily, and not ill-disposed to the English, Mir Jaffir felt that his dissolute nephew would be no match for the all-conquering Colonel Clive, the hero of Trichinopoly, the conqueror of Arcot, now on his way to Calcutta. But while he schemed he intended to sit on the fence until he saw which way the battle went. Admitted to the confidence of Mir Jaffir, Hastings was enabled to send, through friendly Indian bankers, valuable information to Drake, still in command at Fulta. But the time came when he was suspected, and forced to retreat to Fulta.

At Fulta, Hastings met with Mary Buchanan. Tragically widowed, worn with privation and anxiety for her two children, she turned to Hastings for sympathy and companionship. At all times ready to cherish the weak and unfortunate, he saw no way in which to help the lonely woman save to

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give her his name and his protection. And so, at twenty-four years of age, Hastings became a married man.

Some peaceful years lay before the couple. Clive had scored his crushing victory at Plassey and had placed Mir Jaffir on the throne of Bengal, Suraj-ud-Daulah had been brutally murdered by his own cousin, and Calcutta was licking its sores and taking stock of the damage done. Gradually life resumed its normal course. Once again the laden boats went down the river, bearing silks and spices, rice and oil and hides from fertile Bengal. And now Hastings, appointed Resident of Murshedabad, was cherishing the hope that one of his boyhood's dreams would be realised, and that there would, once again, be a Hastings at the family seat of Daylesford. All his affection and hope centred round his little son George.

The marriage was a happy one. "I experience every quality in my wife which I always most wished for in a woman," wrote Hastings to his guardian, Mr. Creswicke. But Mary Hastings' season of happiness was to be a short one. In October of 1758 a second child was born, a daughter, who was named Elizabeth and only lived three weeks. In the following July Mrs. Hastings was laid to rest with her baby daughter in the Residency burial ground at Berhampore.

There is something especially pathetic about the graves of those women who die before their husbands have attained to fame. Often they have borne the burden of poverty and anxiety; yet they

have missed the reward. The name of Warren Hastings was to ring through India and England, to be glorified, execrated and redeemed, yet never forgotten. But to Mary, his wife, he was never more than the kind and thoughtful man in whose arms she had found peace after trial. He was away at the time of her death ; some of the Company contracts had taken him to Rajmahal : " That accursed journey that I shall regret all my life," he said in his overwhelming remorse and sorrow. But the thought of George in some measure comforted him.

Mary Hastings had a friend, Philadelphia Austen, with whom she had travelled to India, and who was now the wife of Dr. Tysoe Saul Hancock. Philadelphia was a rather silly woman, who had been shipped to India by an overbearing step-mother to try her luck in the surest matrimonial market in the world. She had one brother, George, who was the vicar of Steventon, and who, later, became the father of Jane Austen, the novelist. " Phila," as she was called, was a kindly woman, and she now came forward to help Hastings. She took charge of the little boy, and arranged for him to be sent to her brother George in England. It was a strange charge for a young bachelor clergyman, for the child was of an age to require a nurse rather than a tutor. But Hastings, overcome with grief and deeply immersed in the Company's affairs, offered no objection and declared himself under the deepest obligation to Mrs. Hancock. George Austen was fortunate in that Cassandra

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Leigh, whom he shortly afterwards married, was an unconventional woman and not in the least dismayed by this ready-made family. She even insisted upon taking the child on her honeymoon, giving him every care and loving him as her own.

There was much in India at that time to distract a man's mind from his grief. Although the thought of his son gave point to Hastings' ambitions, his personal affairs were never allowed to interfere with the allegiance he owed the Company. If ever a man were true to his salt it was Hastings, who was eventually to place loyalty to the East India Company before his own reputation.

Shortly after his child had been sent to England Hastings was appointed to the Council at Calcutta. Four years later he sailed with the Hancocks for England. Rather sombre and battered by fourteen years in the East, he was sustained by one great hope, that of seeing his son again. Hastening to Steven-ton, he was met by Mrs. Austen, who broke the news that little George was dead. A shadow came over Hastings' face that did not lift for years. For a long time afterwards he remained a broken man.

Hastings now found himself desolate ; there seemed little to live for. He had few relatives, and those he had saw in him a sad-eyed man who was only too eager to forget his own troubles by helping others. Most of them needed help, and took it gladly, looking upon the retired Indian official as a permanent source of income. His generosity bordered upon recklessness ; he helped friends as well as relatives, and retired into the country to

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lead a studious life. Gradually he realised that his money affairs had fallen into disorder ; that the inroads made by his unbounded generosity had left him almost in want. Then, after four years, he was obliged to petition the East India Company for further employment. Although his condition was such that he was obliged to borrow money for his passage and outfit, it was a stronger force than poverty that set his face once more to the East. He had grown restless in a society that offered him little distraction from his thoughts. Still young, he missed the responsibilities that had been part of his life, and the sense of adventure that was lacking in the English scene.

The Directors of the East India Company had been pleased to appoint Hastings Senior Member of Council in Madras on the recommendation to the Governor, Mr. Du Pré, to whom they wrote of his " great ability and unblemished character." So on that April day he formed one of the company on the *Duke of Grafton*, a circumstance that was to affect his whole future.

CHAPTER II

ALITTLE god, the Captain walked his quarter deck. They were great men, these Captains of the old East Indiamen, wealthy despots every one of them, seeking their fortunes on the high seas as surely as though they sailed under the black flag of piracy. Honest piracy, legitimate profits, for the Captain's trading was recognised by the Company. He bought his command from the owner, the "ship's husband," and paid highly for it, the Company granting him the right to free trade in a given number of tons. Enormous profits were made in the carrying of tea and diamonds, cloves and pepper, shellac and sandalwood. Most of these men calculated to retire after four or five voyages. Some of these voyages might yield them as much as ten or twelve thousand pounds. Small wonder that they were proud and that humbler men sought their favour.

Back in England the accustomed trend of life went on. The young Royal couple at St. James's led the simple, frugal, domesticated existence which was their pleasure. But society was strangely averse to follow the Court example. London was a jolly, roystering place, where a Prime Minister flaunted his light-of-love at the Opera, and other assemblies of fashion, and a beautiful Duchess bribed a butcher with a kiss. Dr. Dodd, the clergyman-forgery, filled his church with fashionable congregations, while he indulged the luxurious tastes which eventually led him to Tyburn.

The mob surged round the doors of the wealthy,

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shouting for "Wilkes and Liberty," while Hogarth caricatured the great agitator's physical peculiarities, and Dr. Johnson snapped out that he would sooner dine with Jack Ketch than with Jack Wilkes. The haggard beauty of fifty, Elizabeth Chudleigh, prepared her white satin and pearls for her bigamous marriage to a Duke, and the acrid pen of the mysterious Junius set political circles in a panic ; for who could be certain that he would not be next in the pillory ?

In his hideous sham-Gothic villa at Strawberry Hill Horace Walpole drew paper towards him, and, with elegant quill, set down his bright malice :

"The East India Company is all faction and gaming. Such fortunes are made and lost every day as are past belief. . . . Even Jewish prophets would have found Eastern hyperboles deficient if Nineveh had been half so extravagant, luxurious and rapacious as this wicked good town of London. I expect it will set itself on fire at last and light the match with India bonds and bank bills. . . ."

But London life had ceased to concern the passengers on the *Duke of Grafton*. Closed down into a little world of their own, they settled to the monotony of grey waves or blue, clear skies or stormy.

"People who pray for long life have it in their power to live as long as they think proper. They need only to go to sea to turn seconds into centuries,"

wrote Alexander Macrabbie some years later. This was true of most voyages in those times. There

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were few distractions. The sight of a sail on the waste of waters, of a low coastline heaving up on the horizon, the possibility of meeting with the pirates that still infested those seas, the cry of the look-out man in the "crow's nest," the changing of the watches, the clang of the dinner bell ; these were the matters that most concerned the passengers of the East Indiamen that dawdled the seas.

Food was simple and plain, but plentiful. Besides casks of meat, flour, oatmeal, butter, bread and potatoes the "wind-jammers" carried crates of oranges and lemons, and gallons of lime juice to supply the lack of green vegetables. Gentlemen brought their own servants as well as their wine. They were also expected to furnish their cabins. The equipment suggested by the Company was modest : table, chairs, a sofa and a wash-stand. Most people, however, preferred to provide themselves more luxuriously for so long a voyage. There may still be found in Calcutta pieces of mahogany furniture designed and made for the furnishing of these cabins, which were considerably larger than even those of modern luxury liners. Passage rates were high. Officers of the Company paid according to their rank, from £250 down to £55, and, for some reason, passages homeward were considerably more expensive than for the outward passage. Perhaps it was supposed that those who had shaken the pagoda tree could better afford the expense.

It has been suggested that Warren Hastings at

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once fell in love with the pretty Baroness. It is far more likely that, at this stage, his feelings were those of friendship and an abstract admiration. At no time inclined to gallant adventure, he was scarcely likely to have fallen a sudden victim to a passion for another man's wife. His first marriage with a young and recent widow had been impulsive enough, but the impulses of thirty-seven are not those of four-and-twenty.

The scandalous assertions made by Gleig and amplified by Macaulay, have been accepted without question for more than a hundred years. Yet it is impossible to believe that these three persons, Hastings and the two Imhoffs, proceeded to make the shameful pact that has been imputed to them—that Marian should divorce her husband, who would retire with a nice sum of money, leaving the field open for the Senior Member of Council. The Imhoffs were to live together until the time was ripe for the domestic readjustment. When one remembers that the Imhoffs lived together for a year in Madras the whole business sounds fantastic. In considering the suggestion, founded on nothing more substantial than the gossip of the day, one has to reckon not only with the character of Hastings but with a normal and well-behaved couple in the Imhoffs themselves. There is not one scrap of evidence to show that Karl Imhoff was so despicable as to consent to sell his wife to the first bidder, or that the Imhoffs were not, at this time, as satisfied with one another's society as the average husband and wife can claim to be. As far as any

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outsider could observe, they were not unhappily married.

There can, however, be no doubt that Hastings and Marian formed a deep and close friendship during those quiet days at sea. Hastings was in a somewhat dangerous condition of loneliness and depression. Marian's gaiety of manner, her flattering deference to himself, and the intimacy into which they were forced by circumstance all combined to break down his armour of reserve.

It was natural that Marian should have turned to Hastings for companionship on a lengthy voyage. She had little in common with the only other woman passenger, the young woman who called herself Mrs. Thompson, whose manners had none of the elegance of the gently bred. A greater contrast to the Baroness can scarcely be imagined than this flaunting lady, with her fine clothes and bold eyes. But since they were the only two women travelling in the saloon they were forced into a certain degree of friendship, even of confidence. Marian was told, and doubtless believed, that Mrs. Thompson was the wife of an officer in the Company's Marine Service who had preceded her to Calcutta in order to persuade the Governor, Mr. Verlst, to recommend him for an appointment ashore.

This story was a fabrication. Mrs. Thompson, whose correct name was Sarah Bonner, was a young woman of low origin, who had succeeded in entangling a Marine officer and persuading him to procure this passage for her. Later she was to prove a

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source of embarrassment to Calcutta society in general, and to Mr. Hastings and some of his friends in particular. For Sarah Bonner was not averse to attempting a trifle of blackmail.

Fate, ever watchful, now stretched out a hand to seal the destiny of Warren Hastings and Marian Imhoff. The *Duke of Grafton* rounded the Cape of Good Hope in a storm ; heavy seas are almost inevitable on that coast, where, years later, the *Grosvenor* was so tragically wrecked. The inclement weather brought out some germ of malaria in Hastings' blood and confined him to his cabin. Marian's maternal instincts were touched by his helplessness. She felt that he needed her care, so, ever practical and domestic, she took command of the situation. She was, she felt, the only woman on the ship who was fitted to do so, for "Mrs. Thompson" was too deeply engaged in casting flirtatious eyes at the ship's officers to have any other concern, and the maids had their own duties. Marian decided that a sick man could not be left to the clumsy ministrations of his own servant, Hugh. So once again she invaded the round-house and, gently domineering, reduced Hastings, who hated to be seen in a state of illness, to submission. She even went along to the galley and prepared his food. She attended her patient day and night, sitting with him while he slept. Waking from a fevered dream, he would see that auburn head in relief against the sea and sky beyond the cabin window. Nurse and patient, man and woman, it may well be that a new vista of life opened out

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before him, that he realised not his weariness, but his youth. Thirty-seven is no great age he told himself; even though love passed him by, there was happiness in friendship.

“It is true that I am indebted to my first illness for such a proof of your affection as is almost without example, nor in the whole course, or during the consequences of it, have I ever perceived any alteration in that tenderness which I before experienced, and which constituted the great and only blessing of my life.”

Karl, for his part, made no protest. Not that Marian would have taken heed had he done so. To say that he was from the first a complaisant husband is a convenient explanation, too readily accepted by the thoughtless who profess to see in the German a venal schemer.

What is far more likely, in the light of after events, is that Karl Imhoff was an easy-going egoist. A soldier through circumstance, an artist by inclination, he lacked the decision of character which would have appealed to a woman like Marian. He had, in fact, the weakness of the artistic temperament without its compensating virtues. While he respected Marian he also feared her, and in the present condition of his affairs had come to rely upon her more than ever. Their marriage had in fact reached a state of good-natured tolerance, and he did not feel himself in a position to quibble on a matter of propriety. It is significant that they had never quarrelled and that, even after their separation, they remained on good terms. That this was so is shown by the fact that a child of his

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second marriage was named after Marian, and she sent her son Charles to visit his father on his death-bed.

Marian appreciated her husband's tolerance while half resenting it. The long voyage bored her, the society of Karl bored her; the only other woman on board was uncongenial. In Hastings she found a man who weighed his compliments without being able to conceal his regard for her mind as well as her person. Hastings was no colonial Don Juan, which made his evident admiration the more flattering to her.

Like all people of strong personality, Hastings left a definite impression on all who met him. He either attracted or repelled. It was a dangerous quality, but one not without its compensations. Young women in particular seemed to find him irresistible, a circumstance difficult to explain in those who incline to rate appearance above worth. Lazy and tolerant, Karl looked upon his wife's conquest of the Member of Council with a certain amusement not unmingled with relief. Marian was at her best and most vivacious when Hastings was present. His repose and precision of manner seemed to enhance her vivid charm.

The Baroness had, at this time, few of the romantic impulses of a girl. Five years of living on her social wits had inclined her to regard every acquaintance as a potential asset; but with Hastings she became aware of a disturbing sincerity in herself. In him she sensed the strength, the ambition, and the perseverance which were reflected

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in her own character. He inspired her with confidence and the certainty that she had found a firm and faithful friend. And this illness, drawing the two into a closer intimacy, sealed that friendship.

* * *

In October, 1769, those on the *Duke of Grafton* saw the Coromandel coast loom up, dull and flat, and edged with a lacework of wild surf. At last the ship lay at anchor in the Madras Roads, and there were some anxious moments while the surf boats shuddered their way through the walls of foam.

Madras has this distinction over the other strongholds of the British in India, in that it is possible to visualise it to-day as it was in the days of the "Honourable John Company." While other cities have revised and rebuilt themselves almost out of knowledge, Madras is still the India of Clive and Hastings. She stands immutable, calm and lovable. "A withered beldame now, brooding on ancient fame," but a dignified old lady withal. Spacious and nobly planned houses standing in vast *compounds* embowered with trees remain as monuments to those stately days. Even its hotels have an air of other times ; a sense of space and leisure extends beyond the city. This is ancient India. Stretches of rice fields, groups of palm trees, patches of bamboo and clusters of mud huts ; all these have a peaceful aspect as opposed to the feverish growths that enclose the city of Calcutta.

By some mistake the Imhoffs were entered in the

passenger list as bound for Bengal. From a clerk's slip one writer has evolved the theory that Hastings' infatuation for Marian persuaded the Imhoffs to a change of plan. This is not so, for Karl Imhoff had been gazetted to the Madras Army.

Madras, with its monotonous climate, was no healthier than most of the Company's settlements. Neither was it a wealthy community, the opportunities for individual trading being fewer than in Bengal. The settlement was not particularly well off for supplies. Stores and groceries were shipped from England, and most of the fresh meat and poultry came from fertile Bengal. The distinctive feature of the place lay in its buildings, faced with plaster made of shell lime, which took on a dazzling polish. As for gardens, they were somewhat pathetic. William Hickey, who paid a fleeting visit to Madras that year, sneered at "a wild and uncultivated piece of ground with scarcely a blade of grass," which was, nevertheless, the pride of its owner. But Hickey saw Madras only in the dry season.

In spite of such disadvantages Madras was gay enough. Then, as now, the British brought their own social customs and had no intention of changing their habits and mode of living because they found themselves in foreign parts. Dining in the hottest hour of the day, they wore the voluminous garments of fashion, and founded taverns and a coffee-house where they drank more wine than would have been advisable in a climate more

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gracious than that one. Claret, Madeira, gin and brandy, punch and cordials were served as a matter of course at those midday meals.

House rents were extortionate. For his house in Fort George, Hastings paid in rupees a sum approximate to six hundred pounds a year ; which was considerably more than would, at that time, have been paid for a house in the West End of London.

There was much gambling, although play did not run so high as in Calcutta, where, in later years, Philip Francis made a fortune at the whist table. There was music and dancing, and an amateur dramatic society, and the ladies held court in their flowered satin gowns that were only about twelve months out of the fashion. Many of these women were not of pure European blood, for most of the older officials had married dark-eyed girls who at the beginning of the century had had Portuguese names by courtesy, but had later changed them to English-sounding ones. Some of these ladies had even been educated in England and felt humiliated because the consent of the Governor was necessary before they could marry an official of the Company. They were often lazy and pleasure-loving, overbearing with their servants and underlings. Not that the English women were much better. Many of these arrogant matrons were socially dubious and liable to lose their self-control in face of the so-called luxury of the East.

In such a community the good looks and easy assurance of Marian Imhoff stood out firmly. She

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was vivacious, friendly without being familiar, too dignified to ape those whose "cheeks broke out into patches, rouge, Venus bloom and powder, while lavender water, *milles fleur* and bergamot scented the air about them." She had a ready-made social passport, a title to which society is never impervious even though it is that of an impoverished German family. The snobs left cards and the ambitious were careful to remember that the Baroness was a close friend of the Senior Member of Council.

Not that Warren Hastings spent his time in dalliance. He had found the Company's affairs in confusion; the Directors, with esurient shareholders behind them, were growing uneasy about their dividends. Upstart traders, unconnected with the Company, were oppressing the Indians and acquiring fortunes for themselves. So serious had this oppression become that many respectable Indian merchants refused to come forward to contract with the East India Company. The Directors had recommended Hastings to "a policy of temperance, economy and application to the country we are anxious to protect and cherish," and this steadfast man was never one to allow the affairs of his heart to override his devotion to the Company. His task was not easy, but he had a tidy mind, and the art of pigeon-holing the most varied affairs. While occupied with one matter he could nevertheless address himself easily to some trivial detail in an entirely different field.

Ships coming from Bengal brought disturbing

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news. The summer following Hastings' return to India the rains had failed, tanks and rivers dried up, and famine stalked the land. Only those who have seen it can realise what failure of the monsoon means in a country where every humble cultivator relies for his immediate sustenance on his little patch of land. These helpless people have indeed tracked famine to its lair, have seen the crops wither, the fields bare and dry and their children dying before their eyes. And after famine comes its sister, Pestilence, for cholera and fever carry off hundreds. Often whole villages are depopulated, with none left to bury or to burn the dead and scatter their ashes on the sacred river.

Piteous tales reached Madras. There were accusations also. It was said that the East India Company had been responsible for some of the distress, that its servants had created a *corner* in rice, selling it to the starving people at three and four times its price. In England, as well as in India, voices were raised against the Company, and the tide of public opinion began to turn against Lord Clive, in spite of his past endeavours to put down oppression and speculation. The Company was not to blame in this matter, but it is certain that some private persons did exploit the scarcity for their own enrichment. Naturally the Bengal famine had repercussions in Madras. Hastings, as Deputy-Governor, was besieged by complaints, but he was finding time and sympathy for other matters.

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Karl Imhoff had grown restless. He had now been nearly a year in Madras and was finding it difficult to support a family on his cadet pay, even though it was supplemented by miniature painting. He had already painted most of those members of the community who could afford to be painted, and he consulted Hastings as to the wider prospect for his art in Bengal. Hastings gave the matter his close attention, although he appears to have ignored the fact that Imhoff was pledged to the Company to serve with their army in Madras, having accepted service with them and a passage concession. Hastings made a grave mistake when he helped Imhoff to draw up a petition to the Company asking that he might leave for Bengal, there "to practice one of the liberal arts." He was ready to help Imhoff in another direction. Dr. Hancock, who had travelled to England with Hastings on the *Medway* five years before, had recently returned to Calcutta. He had also found that life in England on a limited income could be very dull after India. He was now surgeon to the garrison at Fort William, and to him Hastings wrote in Imhoff's interest :

"In my last I desired you to take the trouble to enquire for a lodging for a Mr. Imhoff, who proposes to try his fortune as a miniature painter in Bengal. Mr. Imhoff is a shipmate of mine, an officer of some rank in the German service, sent hither with great expectations as a cadet with a family, and must have starved had he not, happily, been qualified to seek a livelihood in a more profitable employment. He has had some success here, having taken off the heads of half the settlement, but he must soon be aground."



The Times

MINIATURE OF WARREN HASTINGS
(painted by Baron Imhoff)

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One of the most important heads "taken off" by Karl Imhoff was that of Hastings himself. This miniature shows Imhoff to have been a pretty good painter, although one is forced to wonder whether he flattered all his sitters as he, presumably, flattered Hastings, whom he depicts as looking considerably younger than his years. But the likeness, judging by other portraits of Hastings, seems excellent. This was not the only portrait of Hastings painted by Imhoff; there is one in an art gallery in Berlin, and there may have been others, for Imhoff was an industrious artist, and Hastings was anxious to supplement resources by placing work in his way.

Imhoff's hope that in Bengal he would receive many more commissions for portraits was a reasonable one. Not only was the English population of Calcutta larger and more opulent than that of Madras, but it was more than probable that many wealthy Indians would be among his sitters. Portrait painting was then a more lucrative profession than it is to-day; family portraits were not the luxury of the wealthy but a commonplace of all.

Karl Imhoff did not wait for the permission of the Company, but sailed for Bengal in the autumn of 1770. It is not related whether Dr. Hancock assisted him to a lodging, or did anything at all for him, except to describe him later as "truly a German," whatever that may have meant.

Dr. Hancock, on whom Hastings had conferred substantial benefits, does not show up very well in this matter of the Imhoffs; in fact it is from his

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letters to his wife that much of the scandal about Hastings and the Imhoffs is drawn. It was he who wrote, when Hastings had arrived in Calcutta as Governor: "There is a lady, Mrs. Imhoff by name, who is his principal favourite among the ladies. . . . She is about twenty-six years old, has a good person and has been very pretty, is sensible, lively, and wants only to be a greater mistress of the English language to prove she has a great share of wit. . . ." He went on to say that when Imhoff came to Calcutta Marian "remained on at Madras and lived at Mr. Hastings' house on the Mount."

Hastings' house at Madras was not on the Mount, the usual residential quarter, but in the Fort where, years before, young Robert Clive had attempted to blow out his brains. If Marian lived on at the Mount it was certainly not at Hastings' house. Apart from any question of morality, then at a low ebb, Hastings was far too ambitious and anxious to set an example of probity to younger men in the Service to have flaunted an open scandal. That he was on the best of terms with Imhoff is proved by a letter he wrote to the German after he had left Madras and was settled in Calcutta. Although he addresses him as "Dear Sir" that is no evidence of formality, for this was the normal form of address even between friends. Hastings took enormous pleasure in penmanship, but he was not given to any great warmth of address in his letters. Even those written to the woman whom he loved devotedly for more than forty years are more

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ceremonious than is usual in an intimate relationship.

"I have received your favour of the 5th June," wrote Hastings to Imhoff, "with Mrs. Imhoff's picture enclosed, which arrived in perfect order. I am delighted with the picture which independent of its likeness, is the best painting you have executed, at least of any I have seen. . . . I return you many thanks for it. . . ."

He then goes on to beg Imhoff's acceptance of "a little China paint and a stick of Indian ink that has been sent me from China."

Unless one is prepared to accept Karl Imhoff as the *mari complaisant* and Hastings as the villain of the piece one cannot doubt the sincerity of both men at this stage. Karl evidently sent this miniature of his wife to Hastings from Calcutta as some small acknowledgment of kindness shown to them both. There is something rather touching in this gift, now that the whole circumstance is laid before us. This was Imhoff's customary recognition of hospitality received, but it seems more than a trifle quixotic from a man who is reputed to have sold his wife!

Imhoff, although an artist, was a soldier, and we have no evidence that he was not also a gentleman. He was scarcely likely to have abased himself to his wife's lover. One is inclined to believe that Macaulay's instinct for the dramatic sacrificed him, an easy victim, on the glittering altar of scandal.

The whole matter of the Imhoffs and Hastings is open to conjecture. Had a divorce been decided upon at that time it seems curious that Imhoff should have gone to Calcutta instead of back to

Germany. That he intended to stay in Bengal as long as any portrait commissions could be obtained is evident from a letter which he wrote two years later to the Directors of the East India Company. That letter also shows that he quitted India reluctantly and under protest.

When Imhoff left Madras Hastings had no prospect of being appointed Governor of Bengal. There is no truth in the statement that "the Imhoffs accompanied him" when Hastings went to Calcutta in the early part of 1772. That Imhoff should have left his wife in Madras was understandable, since he had no lodging for her in Calcutta. Marian herself never posed as the neglected and misunderstood wife ; she was by nature too self-reliant, too generous and kindly to do so. But in a society and a country where luxuries are almost necessities, and money lightly got is lightly spent, she found her position as the wife of an impecunious painter incompatible with her ambitions. She was young, she knew herself beautiful, and her later history proved her to be fond of display and circumstance. She may have been impatient of the restrictions of poverty, but that she was "contemptuous" of her husband there is no proof.

If Imhoff still loved his wife his departure was a dangerous move. It may well be that this period in their lives determined the relationship of Hastings and Marian. They were already united by the mysterious affinity which influences friendship as well as passion. They were now thrown into daily contact in a country where the emotions

are quickened by the surroundings and the climate. India conspires with lovers. Days of drenching sunshine, nights when the stars seem to hang like lamps in a canopy of dark blue velvet, and the fire-flies glitter in the tamarind trees like stars that have lost their way. The sound of tom-toms that beat like the pulse of the night, the call of the bright birds that flock in the branches, the hot, heavy scents of the oleander, jasmine and tuberose, all these help to set the scene for passion and romance.

Like all his passions, Hastings' love was calm, deep, earnest, unconquerable, but patient, in fact utterly characteristic of the man. It might, he knew, be years before he could honourably possess his Marian. He could, and would, wait. What is more, in a country where death struck swiftly and suddenly, he was determined to live and make her his. He had a plan to circumvent death—by the careful and temperate living which came naturally to him.

“As for Hastings . . . he is much more tough than any of us, and will never die a natural death,”

Philip Francis was to write contemptuously. Hastings was a man of frail constitution, and it was only the temperance of his life which saved him from the fate of so many of his colleagues.

In the autumn of 1771 Marian set sail from Madras to rejoin her husband in Calcutta. We shall never know the reason for her decision, but it is safe to conjecture that she was feeling the strain of her situation. Even in that easy-going community and at a period when intrigue was part of fashion-

able existence, gossip had been busy with her reputation, for scandal in high places is especially delectable to the idle. Her position grew daily more difficult, and with her usual determination she resolved to end it. One thing is certain, when she left Madras it was without any reasonable hope of an early reunion with Hastings. To all appearance their romance was annihilated by space. India lay between them, backed by the force of public opinion. Hastings seemed to have consolidated his position as Deputy Governor, but his future was uncertain. He knew too much about the Company's vagaries of administration to plan far ahead. In the past his appointment of Resident of Murshedabad had been formally bestowed upon him by his "loving friends," among whom Lord Clive was a signatory. But he was aware that he had never obtained the unreserved favour of the great man, who had openly mistrusted his powers of administration.

Hastings had, therefore, little hope of further advancement, however well merited. But within four months tongues were again wagging; men exchanged significant glances. The lovers were to meet once more, for Warren Hastings had been appointed Governor of Bengal.

CHAPTER III

WHILE Warren Hastings was adjusting himself to the immediate claims of his high office the Imhoffs were busy with their own plans. They were, in a sense, neighbours, for the Governor's "garden house" in Alipore was situated not far from the more modest residence of his German friends. This proximity was, in itself, sufficient cause for comment, for Alipore was the newly built suburb of a community whose mentality can best be summed up in our modern term of "suburban." It must be admitted that the easy-going officials and their lazy wives enjoyed scandal at the expense of the thin, ascetic-looking Governor. What had started as a trickle soon became a flood of surmise when it was known that the Baron and his pretty wife were in straitened circumstances. The gay ladies and gallants of Calcutta looked into their own lives and found it easy to put two and two together and make them run into double figures! The diarists took up their quills and set down their comments. Alexander Macrabie, brother-in-law of the redoubtable Francis, speaks of Hastings as having "lodged the Baron and Baroness in a small dwelling at Alipore." A more cautious comment comes from Dr. Hancock, who remarks that the Imhoffs "do not form a part of Mr. Hastings' household but are often at his private parties."

Naturally enough the gossips concerned themselves largely with the Governor and his charming German friend. It is certain that Hastings fre-

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quently visited the Imhoffs, turning with relief to the lighter atmosphere of their household after the daily perplexities of the Council Chamber. Soon it was generally accepted that the Governor's purse contributed in no small degree to the amenities of the little household. House rents were exorbitant, and Marian found it increasingly difficult to support unaided her necessarily large staff of servants. Those were days when money was not ranked so highly as now, nor were hearts so proud, and Marian had the good sense to accept the assistance which, from another, would have humiliated her. Marian was rarely wrong in her judgment of a man, and she had first learned during that momentous voyage that Hastings had a remarkable flair for acts of kindness. Years later they were both to discover to their cost that others were aware of this propensity, and were by no means averse to profiting by their knowledge.

It was inevitable that general opinion should dismiss the "wronged" husband with a cynical smile. A middle-aged official and the young and ambitious wife of an impoverished portrait painter—it was fatally easy to regard Karl Imhoff as a man of straw. That cynical suggestion has stood for over a hundred and fifty years. It is notoriously easier to contradict facts than to readjust an attitude of mind. But there is little to support the bond which rumour has foisted on Warren Hastings and Marian Imhoff, and time has done little to clear the name of Karl von Imhoff.

The facts are briefly these: the Imhoffs lived

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together in Calcutta for a year. Then, in the February of 1773, Karl Imhoff sailed for England, thence to return to Germany. The manner of his going and the reason for it are proved by documents of the East India Company, which give the lie to the scandalous gossip of the day, too readily accepted by many responsible authorities.

It has been said that the sum given by Hastings to Imhoff as the price of his "abdication" was "considerably exceeding ten thousand pounds," and it is added that, on returning to his native land, Imhoff bought an estate "out of the produce of his wife's attractions."

Another writer merely suggests that Mrs. Imhoff followed her lover to Calcutta—which we have already seen to be untrue—and after the divorce had been obtained became Mrs. Hastings. Imhoff, murmurs the critic, left the country "a richer man." Against this there must be set to the credit of Imhoff's critics that Hastings had a hand ready to help all those who needed money, and that he was not likely to have allowed Imhoff to leave India in a penniless condition. It is more than probable that he did assist him financially, unheeding of the conclusion which posterity would draw from the action.

Karl Imhoff left India under the direct orders of the East India Company. The reason for this was that he had improperly accepted a passage concession under the pretext of serving with the Company's Army while it was his secret intention to seek his fortune as a painter of portraits. From

letters and copies of letters in the records of the Company it appears that the Directors had entered a protest against his leaving Madras. This he had ignored.

In the October of Hastings' first year in Bengal he received, under cover from the Governor and Council of Fort St. George, a disconcerting letter. Under the date of March 25th, 1772, the Directors of the East India Company wrote :

“ The reasons assigned by Messrs. Scott, Imhoff and Dupuy for declining to accept their commission sufficiently prove that they have been found guilty of an artful and deliberate design to impose upon the Company. And, although their application was prior to your receipt of our orders of the 23rd March, 1770, to send home such cadets as should not conform to a military life, yet our sense of the conduct of such persons was too fully expressed for you to be justified in permitting them to remain in India. It was reasonable to you to suppose you would have immediately informed Messrs. Scott, Imhoff and Dupuy of our pleasure respecting cadets after you had received our commands, and if they had then hesitated to fulfil their engagements to the Company, you ought to have sent them home immediately. And, as we are determined wholly to discountenance this practice, we do hereby direct that if Messrs Imhoff and Dupuy do still refuse to serve in the Military, that you do send them home by the first ship from your Presidency for Europe, and if Mr. Imhoff should have proceeded to Bengal, you are to send a copy of their own order to the Governor and Council of that Presidency, who are in such case to conform to our command as signified.”

This arbitrary document gave Hastings deep concern. He had helped Imhoff draft his application to the Company for permission to go to

Bengal and, stung by the sharp reproof, he blamed himself for his own lack of foresight. It is strange that a man so conscientious, so particular in the slightest detail of his work, should have lapsed in his duty here. Such a lapse is difficult to explain ; but it is certain that it had a direct influence upon his future and Marian's.

There was consternation in the little house at Alipore when Hastings appeared with his disturbing communication. If a pact was made it was certainly made then. One can picture the three of them, pale and perturbed, entering into council. Hastings was always simple and direct in his methods, and the time had come for him to put his cards on the table. The man who fought the bitter and indomitable fight to establish British rule in India in his own way ; a man so sure of himself, so conscious of the righteousness of his policy, was not likely to turn faint-hearted when not only his own happiness was at stake but that of the woman he loved.

He had an argument to put forward, and he stated it quietly and forcibly. Imhoff had made a brave bid, both in England and in India, to maintain his family in accordance with his position and his wife's ambitions. Had the East India Company not ordered his return he would nevertheless have been unable to face his liabilities. His responsibility was too heavy for a man endeavouring to make a living in a malarious country ; a man unchartered and uncovenanted to any service, and with only a pencil and brush as his stock in trade.

Hastings had sensed the situation from the first.

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The affairs of the Imhoffs had given him many hours of deep and concentrated thought. A man both romantic and practical, he refused to sentimentalise over a loveless marriage. Never a believer in compromise he had hitherto shrunk from direct action out of consideration for Marian. Now that circumstances dictated Imhoff's departure Hastings felt the position to be a delicate one ; he was nevertheless prepared to take vigorous action. Of Marian's feelings he was assured ; this past year in Calcutta had not obliterated from his memory those glowing days in Madras, and now emergency forced his hand.

Hastings was not a man to drive an ignoble bargain, but he felt himself under obligation to offer security and devotion to the woman he loved and the children she adored. He would educate them and love them as his own. In return Imhoff would be free to return to his own country, there to pick up the threads of life and happiness once more. What could Imhoff say ? What protest could he offer ? He had failed ; he had no means to take his wife with him, and it was evident that he must obey the Company's edict. Hastings, courteous but inflexible, showed him the way out.

A period of indecision followed. Karl found his position difficult. The Company's letter, although it arrived in October, remained unanswered until the following January. Obedience was inevitable ; but there were many matters to be considered. First there was Charles ; the little boy was now five, and Calcutta, with its high infant

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mortality, was no place for him. Yet Marian hesitated, her heart torn as the hearts of mothers in the East are torn to this day. This meant the breaking up of her old life. A glittering prospect lay ahead, but the present was such as to bring out all her good sense and courage. She was not a hard woman ; she loved her children passionately, and had a gentle but somewhat off-hand affection for her husband. And now both must go, to make way for a new scheme of existence. Charles must go with his father, from whom she exacted a promise that he should be gently cared for and left in England with Mrs. Touchet. Karl gave his promise readily. He also felt the difficulty of the present situation. An indolent man, he shirked decisions, but, spurred by Marian, at last wrote his compliance, dated from Fort William :

“ SIR,

“ *15th January, 1773.*

“ I hope my not having answered the receipt of your letter sooner, or complied with the orders of the Board contained in it will not be imputed to the want of respect or submission to the authority, but to the difficulty of determining in what manner I could conduct myself in a case of much importance to my fortune and the welfare of my family, being too well assured from the rigor of the Honourable Company's commands that any remonstrance from me would prove ineffectual and draw on me severe marks of their displeasure.

“ I have resolved on an immediate and literal obedience to it. I therefore request that you obtain for me an order for my admission on any of the ships as a passenger for England.”

This letter is signed :

“ CHARLES D' IMHOFF.”

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Poor Karl Imhoff! It is impossible not to feel sympathy for him, a rather stupid, dreamy, artistic Bavarian of a type whose charm is bound to diminish with the years. There was not much of the dashing young soldier about him now, and he stood bewildered at the turn his life had taken.

Catching at a straw, Marian was glad to feel that Karl and her small son would have a fellow passenger in Francis Grand. The latter was a young soldier who had had a somewhat storm tossed career before receiving a commission in the Company's Army. Still young (he was an ensign at seventeen!), his health had broken down and he had spent the past few months in Calcutta waiting for a ship to take him home. Hastings, remembering how lonely his own first years in India had been, was always kind to the younger men and took a good deal of notice of Grand. A naturalised Englishman of Huguenot ancestry, Grand had a ready passport to Marian's regard. In those days there was no such thing as "home leave," and Grand, to his chagrin, had been compelled to resign the service. Marian was sympathetic, and Grand, although of a turbulent disposition, had good manners and was anxious to please her in any way. He was, in fact, so flowery in his expressions of devotion to the Governor that one suspects him of truckling to those in high places. He extols Hastings' "affability and benevolence" and declares himself "an inmate of the family, and one partaking in a certain degree of his confidence."

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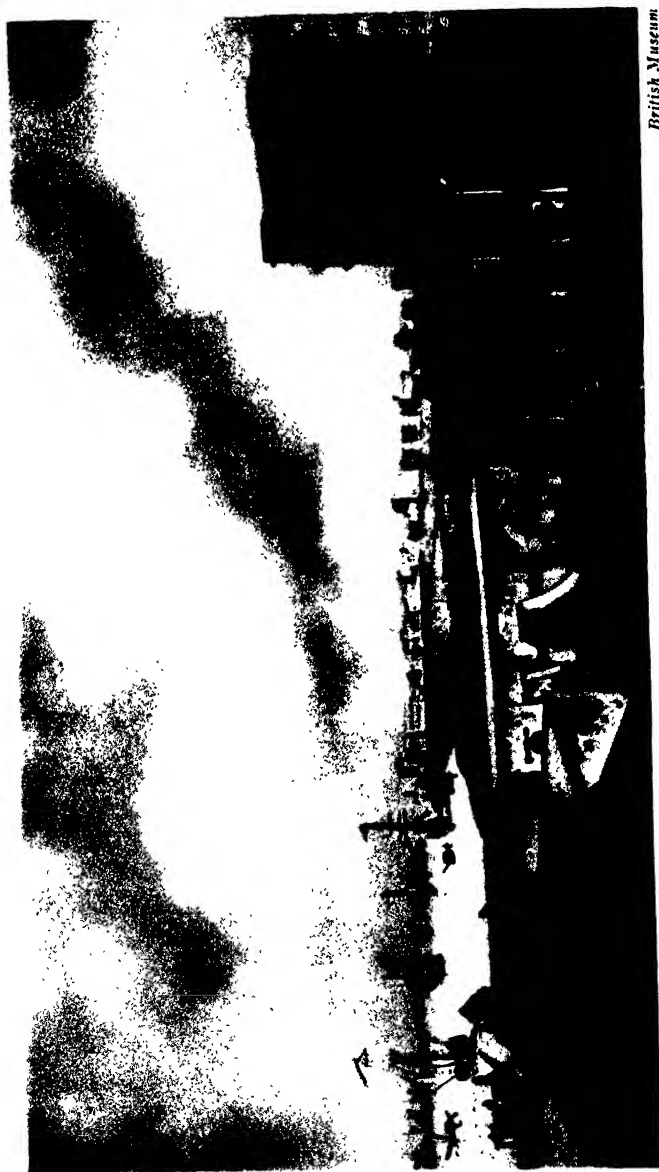
Marian's feelings were mixed as she watched her husband embark on the *budgerow* that was to carry him down river to where his ship lay at the mouth of the Hooghly. They had been married for ten years ; they had shared ease and poverty, and although love had changed to good-humoured tolerance, some tenderness remained, together with the sense of comfort given by an accustomed companionship. There had been no quarrel. Their parting was a matter of expediency, but he had been the lover of her youth, and she cannot have watched his departure without a pang. She saw in Imhoff a good-natured failure, whose easy-going Bohemianism would have led them eventually to penury—or even worse. Such men as he, lacking fixed determination and a scheme of life, deteriorate in India, affected both by climate and soft living. But more than the fear of ultimate disaster had prompted her decision. Hastings' first appeal had been to her sense of adventure ; the frank admiration of an experienced official had flattered her vanity ; but, now that she realised the boundless nature of his ambitions, his rigid determination to overcome all barriers in his path, his quick judgment, and his complete confidence in himself, she knew that here was the man whose fate was to be bound with hers. The man she deserved, thought Marian with the arrogance of youth.

Karl Imhoff sailed in the *Marquis of Rockingham*, and Marian was ready to turn a new page in her history. So far life had presented her with variety of scene and circumstance, those early years of dire

poverty, with their inevitable struggle for recognition and even existence, then swift romance, and a fitful semblance of luxury ; the adventure of the East, the meeting with a man who seemed able to look into her soul, and now this bright vista opening before her.

Marian may have found some strength in the knowledge that during the next few years she would have need of all her dignity, tact and resolution. Karl Imhoff was to procure her freedom and his own, but before that could happen—and news was bound to travel slowly—she would have to face malicious surmise and the wagging of scandalous tongues. For what right had she, a woman alone, to a place in the settlement? The fiction that Imhoff had gone to Germany to settle his affairs and would return, could not be supported indefinitely. Calcutta was not a health resort. Gay and luxurious as was the life of the residents, no one lived there merely for amusement. There could be but one possible reason for her remaining in Calcutta. The gossips nodded comfortably, and accepted Marian's open friendship with the Governor. That he *was* the Governor and not a lesser light, helped to determine her social status. Then, as now, much was forgiven to the friend of an exalted personage that would be condemned in the wife of the subaltern or the planter.

Not that Hastings was free to spend more than a few fleeting minutes of each day in his beloved Marian's society. The Company, although it still declared handsome dividends, was in debt, and the



Painted by W. Hodges, R.A.

A VIEW OF CALCUTTA TAKEN FROM FORT WILLIAM
(from Warren Hastings' collection of Indian paintings)

British Museum

Court of Directors expected Hastings to free them from their burden. Too many Indian deputies were spoiling the broth. The Directors had decided to take on themselves the entire care and management of the revenues through their own servants. Hastings had proved his powers of administration years ago in the difficult post of Resident at the Court of Murshedabad, and he was now called upon to remove the Capital from that place and establish it in Calcutta. To do so involved the displacing of several high Indian officials, and Hastings found it necessary to be both diplomatic and stern. In the end he won through, after some difficulty. Calcutta became the Capital of Bengal, and Hastings installed the widow of Mir Jaffir as guardian to the young Nawab ; later, with Hastings in the stocks, this was to provide his accusers with another missile.

These, with other reforms, kept Hastings from Marian's side. He had removed her from the little house at Alipore, and taken a larger one for her, close to the river and the fashionable promenade about the great tank known as the *Lal Diggee*. This house, which was one of those restored and rebuilt after the siege, still stands. Its entrance front has been faced with red brick and the back, which once had balconies looking on to the river, has been built against and enclosed so that there is now no view. But traces of its former state remain ; in the spacious rooms, the wide stairway and pillared hall. It is easy to visualise those rooms as they were in Marian's day ; walls somewhat bare

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and tinted in delicate hues, with complicated geometrical designs at the corners to suggest the mural decorations of the time. Settees of painted satinwood, mahogany chests with serpentine fronts, and perhaps a cabinet inlaid with loves and doves fluttering among garlands of flowers. The Indian carpenters were expert and accurate copyists and many of the imported pieces of Hepplewhite and Chippendale were reproduced in wood of the country ; in *seesum*, floated down the rivers, in teak and blackwood from Madras.

Then, as now, Marian was reputed to be Hastings' mistress. Even John Macpherson, Hastings' colleague and friend, writing to him from Madras, alluded to Marian as " your fair female friend "—an allusion that Hastings, strangely enough, does not appear to have resented. But it is extremely unlikely that Marian accepted such a status. The very defects of her character made for virtue ; had she been of softer fibre she might have been less chaste. It is certain that Marian Imhoff was no light woman ; a fact demonstrated by the whole of her later history. Yet Hastings' connection with her was pronounced " not creditable to his memory " by one who regarded him as one of the ablest Englishmen of the eighteenth century.

It is noteworthy that even Philip Francis, whose hatred of Hastings was deep and undying, could find little that was derogatory to say of Marian. Had there been an open scandal in his own life Hastings is not likely to have written in the letter

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that brought about the famous duel, "I judge of his (Francis) public conduct by my experience of his private, which I have found to be void of truth and honour." These were strong words for a man who was not given to heat or impatience, especially as the motive of the duel was political rather than personal.

An uncharitable half-truth is often elevated, in the course of time, into something that passes for fact. Macaulay's disparaging paragraphs, reinforced by the tattle of Dr. Hancock, have proved to the taste of generations of easy-going writers. Yet what, fundamentally, is there to support the view that Marian Imhoff was Hastings' mistress during those years before the divorce decree came through? Circumstantial evidence is notoriously unreliable in matters of sex. It is not denied that Marian lived alone in Calcutta for five years under the protection of Warren Hastings, that he provided for her in all things, and was frequently in her society. Neither the cynical commentator, nor the witty diarist in search of copy, cares to look further. But what of evidence? In a country such as India, not only the grime of one's linen, but its very texture is common property. The peccadilloes of the most junior writer in the Company's service could not have been concealed in the Calcutta of that time, with its handful of Europeans. Was the Governor-General likely to be spared the spot light? Yet there is not one scrap of material evidence that Hastings was ever more than the nominal protector of Marian. Surrounded by

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servants, constantly in the company of half-trying friends, could these two, had they been lovers, have failed to drop even one damaging clue to their relationship?

Marian had no intention of being either an acknowledged or a hidden mistress; such a position would have been as intolerable to her as to Hastings. It was his hope and intention that his Marian should eventually be the great lady of the settlement; obviously it was due to his dignity and hers that no colour should be given to the almost inevitable scandal. And Marian? Was it at this stage love or ambition that held her? It is difficult to say, but one is inclined to suggest the latter. She was an imperious woman, supremely conscious of her youth and charm, and fully aware of her value. She loved luxury and display, and was greedy of place and power. But this was in her early days, before time and the devotion of her "incomparable husband" had softened her.

Marian in her "gloomy mansion," as Hastings called it, lived on and hoped. As the months slipped into years and no word came from Germany, anticipation yielded to a dull ache of patience. Sometimes fear shook her lest her beauty faded before her ambitions were fulfilled. But a pretty woman could amuse herself in Calcutta. There were suppers and dancing and jaunts on the river, on which many people kept their own gaily decorated *budgerows*. It was modish to take an evening airing in one of these craft, with an African slave or two to wave the fans or play on some musical

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instrument. Not that the river air can have been very salubrious, for the banks were strewn with garbage and often with corpses.

Calcutta was gay and opulent, but extremely unhealthy. Well might the servants of the Company meet in the month of October and congratulate one another upon being alive ; for death took heavy toll of them. The marshy village that had been Charnock's halt at midday had grown into a handsome but insanitary town. The only supply of drinking water was that of the great tank in the square. Although this was supposed to be closely guarded to prevent washing and bathing in it, pariah dogs often managed to slip through the palisades and refresh their poor mangy bodies in the cool water. Not far distant was the Portuguese burial ground, which flooded in the rainy season. It is not difficult to understand why the inhabitants of old Calcutta preferred to drink wine rather than water. Not that this preference tended to longevity. The old graveyards of St. John's and South Park Street are filled with those whom the gods loved—but did not spare.

The village of Chowringhee was then a small clearing in dense jungle. Where the Cathedral now stands were marshes in which wild boar were hunted on elephants. The roads were in bad condition and dead bodies often lay for days rotting in the sun, inviting the attention of jackals, vultures and crows. The town was, however, sending out tentacles. It was becoming fashionable to own a garden house in the suburb of Alipore. The

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Governor had one of these, but lived mostly in his house on the Esplanade, which was so small that he was obliged to hold his parties and receptions in the Old Court House.

On the whole life was easy for Marian. The ladies who swung their hoops about the great tank in the evening or drove on the dusty "course" in their smart little phaetons had their own intrigues and *liaisons*. No one was coldly critical of pretty Mrs. Imhoff living in their midst. Those were lax times and the climate made them more so. Ladies had scarcely landed in Calcutta before they were besieged by applicants for their hands. Some of them were scarcely more than children brought to India by their injudicious mammas. Warren Hastings had, in later years, to use his authority to prevent Mrs. Hancock from bringing his god-daughter Elizabeth to India at the age of twelve.

Dr. Hancock was one of those who visited Marian in her stately house by the river. He was no longer practising his profession, but was engaged in various financial schemes, all of which were doomed to failure. Once genial, he had grown irritable with brooding on his misfortunes, and was more than a little resentful that the Governor could find him no place in the new order of things. Hancock had evidently hoped for preferment when his generous friend was established in a high position. When Hastings appointed the Hon. John Stuart as his secretary, Hancock wrote to his wife that "Mr. Hastings' residence at Madras has greatly increased his former reserve . . . I have no influence with

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him," and he dismissed Stuart as "a Scotsman, and happily blessed with an opinion of his own importance."

Ready as Hastings was to open his purse to all and sundry, he had no intention of being imposed upon or exploited. When a friend once pressed him for some appointment he replied quietly : "As to my friends I will gladly serve them ; but as to my friend's friends I neither can nor will serve them." In a land where nepotism ran riot, where even a printer, with no medical qualifications, could aspire to be appointed surgeon on a homeward bound East Indiaman, this was an admirable attitude.

Hastings' generosity was almost instinctive. He gave freely and as a matter of course. Money was to him but a means of relieving the necessities of others. When, some years later, the improvident Hancock died, leaving his affairs in a characteristic state of confusion, Hastings, after endeavouring to disentangle them, took a short cut out of his difficulties by settling ten thousand pounds on the widow and her daughter.

Philadelphia Hancock was now in England with her only daughter, named Elizabeth after Hastings' little girl. A foolish woman Phila, who when her husband complained of gout in the stomach suggested that he "ought to endeavour to bring it to the feet." To Marian, Hancock complained that his wife persisted in working him gaudy waistcoats, one after another. . . . "And my days of coxcombry are long past," he lamented. He was

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indeed a sick man at the time, yet was forced to live on a diet of salt fish and curry, the better to support his wife's extravagances in England. Philadelphia had also the annoying habit of claiming her husband's interest and hospitality for various "friends" that she picked up anyhow and anywhere. Her loving husband had never held a high opinion of her judgment. So importunate did she become that he was, at last, goaded into sending her a draft form of refusal, to be presented to such as regarded India as Eldorado, and her husband as a person of influence and wealth. But still they came; and, in the end, the Governor was usually called upon to help in disposing of the unwelcome visitors.

There was, of course, a good deal of scandal. In that first summer the ladies were whispering behind their chicken-skin fans of the affairs of Mr. Barwell, one of Hastings' colleagues. There was a lady living at his house in Alipore in whom we recognise our friend Sarah Bonner. Her "husband" had obtained the shore job for which he had petitioned; the obliging Barwell had seen to that! But as the appointment was that of Deputy-Paymaster of Berhampore, to which station Sarah refused to go, he had little chance to enjoy what he called her "soporiferous charms." Barwell had offered the couple his hospitality in their early days in Calcutta, and Sarah preferred the comfort of the imposing house at Alipore to the chances and changes of a small station up-river. She also preferred Barwell's society to that of her reputed

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husband. Calcutta was tolerant enough, and could overlook the conduct of a well-behaved sinner. But Sarah was far from discreet. She flaunted her vices and forced comment. Her behaviour was in keeping with her dress which, aiming at the male heart, unleashed the female tongue. Her acquaintance was apt to prove a social liability, as Marian was later to discover.

One of Marian's visitors was the much-married Mrs. Watts. She was an old friend of Hastings, having been a fellow prisoner at Murshedabad after the siege. William Watts had been Chief Agent to the Company at Cossimbazaar. He was now dead, and his widow was on the verge of taking a fourth husband. This time it was the Reverend William Johnson, the chaplain of Fort William. Why she should have chosen him is not easy to understand, for he was a worldly, self-seeking person, and she ended by despising him heartily. This adventurous lady whose hand had rested trustingly in that of successive bridegrooms, was not disconsolate when the Reverend William Johnson turned his smug-face towards England. She remained in Calcutta for another quarter of a century dispensing hospitality with a gusto and dignity which earned for her the nickname of "Begum Johnson." A brilliant hostess with an unexhaustible fund of anecdote, she was worldly in the best sense of the word. As a friend of Hastings she found it easy to ignore rumours and extend her friendship to Marian. While Marian, who had a pretty wit

herself, found the " Begum " amusing and enjoyed her racy stories.

Meanwhile, the Governor's brow was furrowed, his mouth set close. There was trouble in England ; Lord Clive was being attacked, questioned, tortured.

" Although Lord Clive was so frank as to confess a whole folio of his Machiavellism they are so ungenerous as to have a mind to punish him for assassination, forgery, treachery and plunder, and it makes him very indignant. . . ."

So lightly did Horace Walpole take his countryman's crucifixion. The censure was rejected ; but the harm had been done. From being the nation's idol and wonder Clive was now a subject for its mockery. People muttered as his carriage passed. Much that he had never done was brought up in accusation, the good was lightly jettisoned. Years later Hastings was also to taste the bitterness of mob passion. But he was of tougher fibre. No drugs would ever cloud his brain, no shameful death awaited him. The future loomed before him, black, treacherous, almost fantastic. Clive's fate seemed at once distressing and remote. No one was ever more certain of his own moral rectitude than Hastings.

The Rohilla war was being fought. Hastings had sent troops to aid Sujah-ud-Daulah, Nawab Vizier of Oude, in his crusade against the marauding Afghans who were drawing uncomfortably close to his territory. It was said that the Governor of Bengal had sold his troops to fulfil the Nawab's

ambition, and make him undisputed monarch of the whole territory of Oude. Let them say ! The Company's Army was strong, but its coffers needed replenishing. Trade had recovered somewhat from the recent set-back of famine and dissension, but the holders of India stock were still crying Give ! Give ! Towards the Company Hastings was like a mother with a spoilt child. Let them ask ; he would give !

The affairs of the East India Company were then much in the public mind. Lord North, who was now Prime Minister, had evolved a scheme that would cripple the free hand hitherto allowed to the Governor of Bengal. As Burke was to point out, the Company that had begun in Commerce was ending in Empire, the State was disguising itself as a merchant. The Regulating Act aimed to transfer the rule from a trading company to the King and Parliament, with a Council and Governor still responsible to the Court of Directors, and pledged to keep them informed as to the interests of the Company. In fact, it was generally felt that England's Indian interests could no longer be left in the hands of a mere trading company, with greedy shareholders clamouring for larger dividends.

The new order of things sent echoes into drawing-rooms. Marian, who was by nature a woman of affairs, sensed the importance of the changes. She had a practical mind and was ready to help, advise and comfort her lover and friend. She assured him that the arrival of the new Councillors and Judges

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would lighten his responsibilities and help to make Bengal more important than ever. The prestige of Calcutta would be heightened by the arrival of these dignitaries and their ladies. But the most succulent news was that henceforth Hastings would be styled Governor-General, with a salary of twenty-five thousand pounds a year. Marian was never one to underestimate the value of wealth, although to Hastings it was merely the glittering milestone on the road to success.

Hastings, like Marian, began to see hope in the change. He was pleased that his old school-fellow Sir Elijah Impey had been appointed Chief Justice ; and Barwell was to be Senior Member of Council. Like Hastings, Barwell was experienced in Indian affairs ; they were in his blood, for he was the son of a former Governor. A pleasant man, Barwell, although Hastings found him tedious at times. He enjoyed life and the good things it offered, and was not too scrupulous as to how he came by them. An able official, he could be counted upon to uphold Hastings' policy.

And the others ? Marian asked. Of them Hastings could tell her little, save that Colonel the Honourable George Monson had served under Clive in the Carnatic wars, and that General Clavering was of the 52nd Foot. How these martial qualities fitted them for the present office was not very clear. But the appointment of Philip Francis to the Indian Council was an even greater mystery. A political adventurer, he had held, for a number of years, the appointment of First Clerk to the War Office. For

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the rest he was a clever, slightly dissipated man about town, with a caustic wit, very little money, a growing family, and a reasonable share of good looks. He had not then come under suspicion of being the author of the scurrilous "Letters of Junius," the brilliant and critical essays that created such a sensation in the reign of George III. And it is characteristic of the caution and subtlety of the writer that it was not until forty years after the publication of the last letter that his identity was even suspected.

So much for the Council. With the Chief Justice were Mr. Justice Chambers, a friend of Dr. Samuel Johnson, from whom he carried a letter of introduction to Hastings ; Mr. Justice Hyde, a pompous person, and Mr. Justice Lemaitre, who had been Recorder of Rochester. Hastings could tell Marian little more at this stage. What concerned her more closely was the female contingent shortly to invade Calcutta, for most of the Judges and Councillors would bring wives and daughters with them. Social life would beat to a faster tempo. Questions would be asked, names would hum in the whispering gallery. Her name ! She would have need of all her charm and dignity, for her position was invidious. A chill fear seized her. Fresh and critical eyes would be upon her . . . questioning eyes.

Everybody looked forward eagerly to the new *régime* . . . everybody that is except, possibly, the Governor and Mr. Barwell. They heard the rumble of distant drums. This influx of men and

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women who knew little of India and Indian tradition might well alarm them. The Councillors and Judges who sailed that April in the *Anson* and the *Ashburnham* unconsciously held life and death in their hands.

CHAPTER IV

IN October, 1774, the Company's vessels *Anson* and *Ashburnham* loomed up out of the Bay of Bengal and cast anchor off Khijiri. The former vessel carried the four Judges who had been appointed by the Regulating Act, and the latter the three new Members of the Supreme Council. Well-appointed *budgerows* had been detailed to bring the new-comers to Garden Reach, three miles down river, and to give them a landing in state from the sloop *Swallow*. They were met at Garden Reach by the Senior Member of the Board and one of the Governor's personal staff, and were received on landing by Hastings and the rest of the Council at his house. But they were not pleased with their reception; they were in fact in the mood to be thoroughly displeased with everything, even with one another. Already the rift between the Councillors and the Judges had shown itself, fostered by the preference given to the judicial ship over the *Ashburnham*.

"They sail faster than we do, and their charter gives them precedence," wrote Mr. Alexander Macrabie, secretary to Mr. Francis.

The truth is the Judges and their ladies had landed in Madras two days before the second party, and so secured a larger measure of the junketings and gaieties. It was a small matter, for the passengers of the *Ashburnham* had nothing to complain of in their reception. Scarcely had they dropped anchor in the Madras Roads than there was a letter from the Governor, Mr. Wynch, bidding

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them to dine at the Residency. The two ships had kept close enough on the voyage for their passengers to visit one another during a calm. It appears that Judge Lemaistre then "kept the table on a roar" for two hours, a proceeding not approved by his brother justice Mr. Hyde, who had his own ideas as to the proper degree of solemnity for a Judge. Nor did Sir Elijah Impey quite approve his colleague's levity, although Lady Impey probably appreciated it. She was a young, kindly and good-hearted woman who loved a joke but was sometimes lacking in tact. She and Mrs. Hyde did not love one another over much, and the many heart-burnings and jealousies on board did not make for friendship.

The party was given a royal reception at Madras, with supper, dancing and a concert. The ladies were dressed in the height of English fashion, and their hoops and laced skirts, their towering head-dresses and coquettish hoods had been greatly admired and envied by their less fortunate sisters. Lady Clavering, herself quite young, had two young step-daughters with her, while Lady Anne Monson was a gay and witty woman of the world and a King's descendant. Lastly there was the bride, Mrs. Chambers, who as the lovely Frances Wilton, had sat to Reynolds as Hebe. She was but sixteen years old at this time, as good and vivacious as she was pretty, and a great favourite with all. Poor child, she could not guess what troubles were before her, of the babes that she would lay in the graveyard at Calcutta and the

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tragedy of the little son lost in the wreck of the *Grosvenor*. This gallant company carried a goodly cargo of malice and envy. The men penned weighty memoranda while their womenfolk planned the early stages of social triumphs. All were united in their outlook on India, the land of prodigal wealth, where diamonds were plentiful as stars in the sky.

The Councillors and the Judges alike landed at Calcutta in ill humour. A storm in the Bay of Bengal had followed a rich meal, and more than one judicial digestion repented at leisure. Gastronomically unhappy, they were more than usually sensitive to social values. It may have been the matter of the guns ; they had anticipated a Royal salute of twenty-one but were accorded only nineteen. It seems a small matter, but Macrabie, Philip Francis' brother-in-law and secretary, was emphatic on the subject :

“ The procession to the Governor's house beggars all description ; the heat, the confusion, not an attempt at regularity. No guards, no person to receive us or show the way, no state. But surely Mr. Hastings might have put on a ruffled shirt.”

The vexed matter of the reception and the guns is quoted in Calcutta even now. There is nothing to show that Francis took exception to the manner of the landing although he certainly referred to “ the mean and dishonourable reception we met with at our landing gave Clavering a second shock.” We do not know the nature of the first shock ! But

neither Francis nor Clavering made any complaint of the landing to the Court of Directors ; and not the most ardent partizan of Hastings can look upon his letter of "justification" as anything but a blunder.

The Council sat on the first day after landing. Barwell was unavoidably absent and Hastings had no supporters. It was evident that the minds of the Councillors were filled with general dissatisfaction. The conduct of the Rohilla war, then just concluded, presented a handy stick with which to beat the Governor. There may have been, at this time, little love lost between Hastings and Barwell, his first Member of Council, but they were both well versed in Indian affairs ; above all they knew the temper and the temperament of the millions with whom they had to deal. Francis and Clavering at least knew nothing ; the former was irritable and contemptuous, the latter choleric and quarrelsome. It was a bad beginning, and Hastings returned to his Marian in a state of despondency. Almost for the first time she saw his buoyant self-confidence obscured. Already he foresaw that he would be condemned to fight against overwhelming odds. In spite of his apprehension he remained calm and determined. Hastings was undoubtedly one of those in whom adverse circumstances bring out the best qualities. Then, as always, Marian was his confidante and support. Her courage and her practical mind both inspired and consoled him. But as the days went on and the dissension grew, his despondency did not lift. Too many were pitted

against him. To a cousin in America Macrabie was writing :

“ Your whole line of rulers . . . cannot furnish out such a Governor as H. The debates of your Colony Councils are the squabbles of boys about tops and marbles compared with the dissension which prevails here.”

* * *

Trouble in the Council chamber had little effect upon the drawing-rooms. Socially Calcutta grew gayer than ever.

“ Balls and masques begun at midnight, burning ever to mid-day
When they made up fresh adventure for the morrow, shall we say ? ”

Dancing was one of the chief amusements all the year round, even in seasons of appalling heat. Minuets, country dances and even reels were danced “ as though they had not an hour to live,” said Alexander Macrabie. Some of them had, indeed, but few hours in which to take their pleasure ; the marvel is that these ladies, with their powdered heads and brocade gowns, survived the climate at all. It was necessary for them to pass through the hands of the hairdresser twice a day. There were two of these experts in attendance and both worked on contract, charging by the month for their attentions. There was a dancing master also, who for the sum of one hundred rupees engaged to teach the latest steps. But the ladies were always booked for the dance two months at least ahead, and only the most alert partners had any chance.

All the circumstances of life in Calcutta tended to extravagance. It was not uncommon to see young writers on small salaries dashing about in magnificent equipages. Money-lenders swarmed ingratiatingly about the new arrivals, spreading their tempting nets, and it was scarcely surprising that many a young man found himself deeply and hopelessly in debt.

There was plenty of card-playing, at which Mr. Francis was particularly fortunate. Lady Anne Monson was a very superior whist player, and Barwell was always relied upon to lose large sums to Francis, who licked his lips as the lamb came obediently to the wolf. A year later Francis wrote to a friend :

“ It is true that I have won a fortune, and intend to keep it. If money be *his* blood I have no kind of remorse in opening his veins ; the blood-sucker should bleed, and can very well afford it.”

Amiable Mr. Francis ! He hated Barwell almost as much as he detested the Governor-General. His luck at the card table was phenomenal ; in one of his letters he records that he won the enormous sum of £20,000 at whist in one day, although whether Barwell was the chief sufferer here is not mentioned. But Francis took his fair share of the Calcutta entertainments. There was a big breakfast party twice a week at the “ lodge ” which he bought at Alipore, and “ we had twenty-five guests at dinner yesterday, thirty at breakfast this morning. . . . There are not less than a hundred servants in our family. . . . Farewell the tranquil mind ; I,

am in a rage from morning till night . . .” wrote Macrabie, who was the housekeeper in their *ménage* and held no high opinion of the Indian servants.

Poor Macrabie ! so lively and so kind, such a devoted echo of his brother-in-law. Two years of the climate were as many as he could endure ; he died in November of 1776.

Already Francis was writing home disparagement of the Governor and all his advisers. Barwell he declared to be “ rapacious without industry and ambitious without exertion of his faculties. . . . He has all the bad qualities common to this climate and country, of which he is, in every sense, a native.” Writing in code to Lord Clive, Francis averred that “ Mr. Hastings has sold and ruined Bengal. . . .” “ If I am recalled you may as well take leave of Bengal altogether . . .” ; while to a brother of his friend Edmund Burke he spoke of “ This glorious Empire which I was sent to save and govern . . . tottering to its doom. . . .”

Such was the egotism of the man who sincerely believed that it was he alone who could save and govern our Indian possessions. But Clive was never to read those malignant lines. A month after the Councillors had landed in Calcutta his triumphant career ended in darkness and misery. The great Imperialist was dead, and none knew whether by his own hand or by accident.

* * *

Hastings was puzzled as well as dismayed by the manner in which his Councillors attempted to

thwart his every action. "I am in the position of a man who sits at the head of his own table with his hands tied," he said. He alarmed Marian when he spoke of resigning. Apart from the fact that her position in the settlement depended upon him, her kindly and generous nature resented the concentrated attack. Hastings was more than her devoted admirer ; her house, her servants, the very clothes she wore were his gifts. And news from Germany tarried. As time passed she began to suspect that Karl Imhoff had not yet presented her petition for divorce to the authorities.

Apart from these difficulties Marian's position in Calcutta was quickly secured by the fact that Lady Impey took a fancy to her. Although the fashionable Lady Anne may have murmured some criticism of the blundering good-hearted lady, the wife of the Chief Justice could afford to ignore whispers. The Impeys entertained lavishly and Marian appeared at all their parties. It must have been somewhat galling for a woman of Lady Anne's age (she was then about forty-five) to be compelled to give first place to a much younger woman. The jealousy between the Supreme Court and the Council extended, in some wise, to their wives.

Calcutta was a jungle in more senses than one. It was a wilderness of intrigue and malice, of rapacity and gossip. Even the Governor felt compelled to turn from his own preoccupations in order to aid one of his Councillors. Mr. Barwell was in difficulties. Sarah Bonner, still living at his house, was engaged in blackmail ! The unfortunate

Barwell was unaware that Sarah was not married to Thompson, and the couple decided that the Councillor would pay more readily to an injured husband than to a deceived protector. Warren Hastings took the matter in hand, executed a deed by which a large sum was paid to "Mrs. Thompson" and packed the lady off to England on the return voyage of the *Anson*.

Barwell was delighted to be rid of his incubus, the more so as he was at this time paying his addresses to one of the daughters of General Clavering. "A damnable match," said Mr. Francis, who on the voyage out had probably cultivated a platonic attachment to the pretty girl. General Clavering, always easily roused, was furious at Barwell's presumption, and added to the unrest on the Council by accusing him of corruption and private trading. Whereupon Barwell retorted that the General was a rascal and a scoundrel—and received a challenge. The duel, however, was a mild affair, followed by an apology from Barwell. There the matter rested, for Barwell married, not Maria Clavering, but Elizabeth Sanderson, daughter of the lawyer who had drawn up his deed of gift to Sarah!

As for the private trading—Barwell was apparently proud of it. "I do not deny the profits I made," said he, "I have always avowed them." A bold buccaneer of the East, Mr. Barwell, but whatever his faults, he had one admirable quality, loyalty to his chief.

With a Council that watched him as a cat watches a mouse, Hastings walked warily, disdain-

ing to abate one iota of his policy, and yet compelled to see an administration opposed to his knowledge and experience. The Councillors, being in the majority, were playing havoc with the order of things in Bengal, and instituting "reforms" that were to be explained only by their inexperience of the country. Hastings passionately compared himself to "the meanest drudge who is happier than he who has to share responsibility for what he cannot approve, and be an idle spectator of ruin that he cannot avert." Had he dealt with fools alone his task might have been easier. Clavering and Monson might rank as little more than hot-headed blunderers, but Hastings did not underestimate Philip Francis' capacity. He knew that, in him, he faced an enemy worthy of his steel.

There can be no doubt that Hastings and Francis hated one another from the first. They had no single point of view or taste in common. But there was a fundamental difference in their feelings; on Hastings' side the hatred was inactive, and in the nature of a cold dislike; while on Francis' part, it was vehement and determined of action. He had early resolved to baffle the Governor-General at every turn, to defeat his policy and to criticise his every act. For if Francis was indeed Junius, his weapons were ready to his hand.¹

¹ In 1816 The Duke of Gloucester sent a copy of *Junius Revealed* to Warren Hastings and urged him to read it. Hastings wrote an elaborate criticism of the book, and came to the magnanimous conclusion that Francis and Junius were not identical. "I am convinced," he wrote, "that there is no foundation, not even a plausibility for the belief."



François Philippeaux

*Citoyen actif & sans Culotte
Publ. 7^e May 1794 by H. G. G.*

British Museum

FRANÇOIS PHILIPPEAUX
(Philip Francis)

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Francis, filled with the usual contempt of the home-trained man for the man who has been educated in the school of events, was blinded by his overwhelming belief in his own powers. He underestimated Hastings' abilities in a manner amazing to us who know now which proved the better man. Brilliance fades before the blind prejudice of one who could write of Hastings : " He has some little talents of the third or fourth order," and could find in him a " weakness and want of judgment ! "

Since they were both human there was another side to the prejudice, a personal side. The very temperance and orderliness of the Governor's life may have aroused a contemptuous fury in the mind of the man who drank deep, played high, and was not above seducing the girl-bride of a man whom he considered beneath him in the social scale. Warren Hastings, with his slight frame, his plain dress, and his quiet but steadfast belief in himself, must have been a thorn in the side of the handsome self-conscious man who always meant to do so much more than he ever accomplished. To a brilliant failure like Francis, the plodding virtues of the Governor-General were both irritating and puzzling.

Then there was Lady Anne Monson, with her idle ship's gossip. She and Francis were great cronies, and it was possibly with the intention of amusing him on a tedious voyage that she poured into his ears an absurd story of Hastings' origins ; that he was a natural son of a steward of her father's, who had sent him to Westminster School with his own sons. Lady Anne ought to have

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known better than to fabricate such a *canard*, but she knew that Francis adored tattle of any kind, and stored it in his diary for future use in his letters. The more malicious the gossip the better he enjoyed it. Francis was probably aware that there was no foundation for the story, although, to his contemporaries, Hastings' ancestry may not have been as familiar as it is to us now. But it all contributed, subconsciously perhaps, to his contempt for the Governor.

Poor Lady Anne ! Her season of Calcutta gaiety was a short one. Not of an age to withstand the vagaries of the climate, she was the first victim of that gay company on the *Ashburnham*. Macrabie says : " The loss of such a woman is generally felt by the whole settlement . . . six ladies bore the pall at her funeral." In the old Calcutta graveyard no headstone marks the resting-place of the great-grand-daughter of King Charles II.

Passionate scenes were taking place in the Council Chamber. Hastings' humiliation and disappointment had driven him to a decisive step. On an impulse he wrote to his agent in London, Colonel Maclean, placing his resignation in his hands, to be presented to the Directors should the tide turn against him. Unfortunately Hastings left this to the discretion of Maclean, who proved to have little of that quality.

Loyally Marian set herself to comfort the man whose destiny was so closely bound with her own. Sometimes it seemed as though they two were alone in a hostile world ; she a discredited woman, he a

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man whose kingdom was falling about him. When he came into that quiet house Hastings felt that even the servants who met him in the vestibule knew the insecurity of his position. Gossip travels quickly through the bazaars, and underlings are sensitive to a waning glory. As they bowed before the Governor some may have speculated how long his state would continue.

There is no doubt that Marian Imhoff was deep in the Governor's confidence. In every crisis of his life he turned to her for sympathy and understanding. "How often," he was to write to her later, "during the course of a morning of fatigue have I quitted my company to enjoy a momentary interval of your delightful conversation." He did not turn to her in vain. Marian was no pretty doll "with petticoats trimmed in the fashion." She was, almost by instinct, a woman of affairs; strong, kind and level-headed. More, she was one of the many women who are sweetened rather than soured by adversity. When life went smoothly she might be arrogant and capricious; but reverses of fate sharpened her sympathies and brought out her best quality, courage. Like Hastings himself, she revived and found stimulus in the bright face of danger.

It is at this point interesting to speculate how deeply Marian Imhoff was in Hastings' confidence, and how far her influence over him extended. It is certain that this "cautious and secret" man did rely greatly upon Marian's judgment and intuition. The question inevitably arises—were his actions at a crisis in his life affected by her advice? It would

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be daring to suggest that Hastings' decisions were, at any time, determined by his love and admiration for the charming lady in the gloomy mansion. But the facts stand out. On March 27th, 1775, Hastings wrote to place his resignation in Macleane's hands ; on May 18th, less than two months later, he wrote to recall it—too late. This action is surprising in one accustomed to make rapid and firm decisions. The man who, in the face of determined opposition, could hurl armies across India, and defy Acts of Parliament, displayed an unusual infirmity of purpose. Is it impossible that Marian Imhoff, with her strong common-sense, braced his mind into rescinding the action which arose from despondency ? This was one of the supreme moments of her life. If Hastings fell from his high estate she fell with him. Without him she had no future. But it was not alone self-interest or ambition which inspired her. She knew that, if, in a moment of pique or despondency, Hastings renounced India at this crisis he would be consumed with remorse and regret for the rest of his days. No one who knew Hastings as intimately as Marian did could, for a moment, doubt that he loved India and its people, and regarded himself as holding the country in trust.

* * *

One of the disagreements on the Council concerned charges made against the Governor by the Maharajah Nund Kumar. Nund Kumar was clever, experienced, wealthy, and he cherished an

old grudge against Hastings. In his philosophy the best way to ingratiate himself with the Council was to abuse the Governor—and in Philip Francis he found a ready mouthpiece. The Maharajah charged Hastings with receiving a bribe from the Mani Begum, widow of Mir Jaffir, to appoint her guardian of the young Nawab. A letter purporting to be from the Begum herself was produced in evidence. Had it not been a forgery it was still worthless as evidence, for the Begum, although a shrewd and clever woman, had been a dancing girl, was unlettered, and would have set her seal to any document that she thought would please and conciliate the Company. She, in common with many others, believed “The Honourable John Company” to be a majestic elderly female who sat in state, and sent forth her numerous sons—of whom Hastings and Clive were the most distinguished—to gather riches for her.

The Governor took a disdainful attitude to the accusations. He refused to allow the Maharajah to appear before the Council, and ignored the fact that Francis and his friends were receiving him at levees of their own.

Calcutta was suddenly agitated by the news that Nund Kumar had been arrested and thrown into prison. The charge was forgery, and the alleged crime, which dated six years back, had a moral as well as a legal aspect. For the forged document was the betrayal of the trust of a dying man and deprived the widow and her children of half their fortune. Many people were convinced that Hastings

was instrumental in procuring this belated arrest in order to muzzle his detractor and ensure his eternal silence. The rumour may have stimulated society's palate and constituted the reason for general interest in a trial which might otherwise have been ignored by the fashionable.

"All the world has gone to the Court House to hear the trial of Nuncomar," wrote a lady of the time. The trial lasted for eight days, and the month was June ; society must have suffered almost as much as the Judges in their full robes and wigs. But the intolerable atmosphere of the Court House was bravely borne by the seekers after sensation.

Nund Kumar was found guilty and condemned to death. It is said that Mr. Francis refused to be a signatory to an appeal against the death sentence. Possibly he realised, even then, that Nund Kumar dead was a better weapon for his revenge than when alive.

For a time after the execution of Nund Kumar the Council lay quiescent, brooding fitfully on the Governor and his affairs. They might murmur among themselves, but Hastings had proved his strength. But an eruption occurred in the summer of 1777. News arrived that Colonel Maclean had tendered Hastings' resignation to the Court of Directors and that it had been accepted. General Clavering was appointed to temporary succession until Mr. Wheler could arrive in India.

When the news arrived in Calcutta Clavering at once took his seat at the head of the Council table, demanded the keys of office and acted generally in the most violent, discourteous and precipitate

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manner. Hastings flatly and absolutely refused to abdicate ; he declared that his agent had no power to tender the resignation and had indeed been forbidden to do so. He had no intention of delivering India into the hands of men whose policy he had never trusted. What did hot-headed Clavering know of the people he proposed to rule ? Or for that matter Philip Francis, for all his keen intellect ? Francis had never cared to travel through the country or apprise himself of the habits and thoughts of the people. His horizon was bounded by Calcutta, where he buried himself in business, in writing contemptuously of the country and its inhabitants and in various social recreations.

The "convulsion," as Hastings described it, lasted four days. Marian's state of mind can well be imagined. An active woman, she sat there helpless while the prospect of happiness, honour, wealth and consequence faded before her. She had endured years of waiting, and now it seemed that she was to be no more than the comforter of a broken man. Not that it was easy to picture Hastings as broken by even the most adverse circumstance. This was to be proved during those seven years of cat and mouse procedure at Westminster Hall, when Hastings' unconquerable belief in his own rectitude drove Burke to fury.

Hastings afterwards said that he might have yielded place to Sir John Clavering but for the overbearing manner in which he behaved. This is doubtful, considering the fighting quality of the intrepid man. As it was he held Council in another

room, directed the officers of the Company and the garrison to obey no orders but his, and insisted upon the whole matter being referred to the Supreme Court. Mr. Francis' joy in the situation was short lived, and his animus against the Judges greatly increased by the result.

"I wish you would enquire and tell me in what dirty corner of Westminster Hall these cursed Judges were picked up," said he.

The Court, led by Sir Elijah Impey, decided for Hastings, although it threw out the suggestion, which was certainly unworthy of Hastings, that Clavering, by his unmannerly and unconstitutional behaviour, had forfeited his right to a place on the Council.

Calcutta society soon had more personal material for gossip. Early in July the *Ripon* arrived in the river, bearing the long awaited divorce papers and Marian's freedom. The reason for the delay has never been explained. It might be ascribed to the fact that reigning Dukes cannot be hurried, and that the papers, presented even so long as four years earlier, may have lain in some archive awaiting the august signature. It is however usually accepted that Karl Imhoff's second marriage took place in 1775, but this can scarcely be so in face of the date of the Divorce Decree, which is dated June, 1776.

Translated by the Reverend John Kiernander, the document runs as follows :

CHARLES AUGUSTUS, by the Grace of God
Duke of Saxony, Juliers Cleve, and Berg of Engern
and Westphalen, etc. etc.

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It has been humbly represented to us by Charles von Imhoff that Anna Maria Appolonia Chapusettin, with whom he has lived several years in the conjugal state, and who after following him in a voyage to Madras and Calcutta in the Kingdom of Bengal and abiding with him there, did remain in Calcutta after him, and does insist upon being parted from him. The said von Imhoff has also not only proved the truth of this his assertion from a written declaration of the said Anna Maria Appolonia Chapusettin attested by three witnesses and delivered to him, but has further shown thereby that she, the said Chapusettin, has confirmed this, her determined purpose, by solemn asseveration involving the name of Almighty God—and whereas he subsequently declared himself not inclined to return to Calcutta aforesaid, and as he cannot be compelled thereto, he thought best to comply with the desire of the said Chapusettin, and considering himself as an abandoned conjugal mate he therefore humbly prayed for the absolute dissolution of the Matrimonial Tie that binds him to the said Anna Maria Appolonia Chapusettin. Therefore, in consequence of the circumstances above related and upon sufficient information adduced we have not hesitated entirely to dissolve the bonds of Marriage that have united the said Anna Maria Appolonia Chapusettin and the aforementioned Charles von Imhoff. So by virtue of these presents we do declare them annulled-void and of no value whatever. To enforce the Belief thereof we have granted to the petitioning Charles von Imhoff this Letter of Divorce authenticated by our sign manual, and the addition of our Ducal seal, and have ordered it to be expedited and delivered to him.

This done and granted at Weimar, the first day of June, 1776.

Signed CHARLES AUGUSTUS,
Duke of Saxony.

This document was endorsed, if such support were needed, by Mr. Kiernander, the first Protestant missionary to land in Bengal :

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"With regard to the validity, authenticity and regularity of the annexed deed of Divorce between C. C. von Imhoff and A. M. C. Chapusettin I am fully of opinion that it is perfectly in order, that the signature of the Reigning Duke is usual and sufficient in such cases and cannot be confirmed by a higher hand. Regarding the intent of it I humbly conceive that first, as it is declared to be an entire annulment of the former marriage contract, from that day both are to be considered as single persons free from each other. And that secondly, as there is not a word of prohibition mentioned either for the one or the other, that is him or her, against a second marriage which is usual in such cases when the hindrance is meant, I conclude that they must be at liberty to enter into any other engagements.

" (Signed) J. Z. KIERNANDER.

" CALCUTTA

" *12th July, 1777.*"

The news, so long expected, so frequently discussed, sent a quiver of excitement through Calcutta. The divorce had been so long delayed that many had come to disbelieve in it. A light cynicism had become the social tone. But the Governor had shown a flair for the unexpected. He had proved that he could be a dangerous foe, and men had long hesitated before making sly reference to the "fair Baroness." Marian, too, had shown one or two of her women friends that she had no intention of being either snubbed or patronised. In consequence there had grown up a certain coldness about her. What would happen now? Evidently the lady would be in a position to queen it over them. How would she fit into her new situation?

Marian, calm and a trifle haughty, came forward to answer the questions.

INTERLUDE

IT is November, 1777, and Mr. Francis is giving a ball. He strolls happily among his guests, scattering gay asides with the airy cynicism which Calcutta has come to expect of him. No one takes offence, for he has assembled his guests with the care of an epicure. One lady does indeed remark that "Mr. Francis throws a compliment to a lady as a man throws a bone to a dog!" But after all, a compliment must be accepted in the spirit in which the dog accepts the bone.

It is a splendid affair and all Calcutta is there. Hundreds of wax candles protected by tall glass shades shine down on women wearing gowns of lustrous brocade over enormous hoops, while the gentlemen are able, now that the cooler days and nights have come, to wear their best laced coats. Even the Governor, usually so averse to pomp and circumstance, has put on his coat with the gold lace, and if the lace is a trifle tarnished "it will do very well by candle light," he has said.

Mrs. Hastings is magnificent enough to compensate for any such deficiencies in her husband's attire. Her satin gown has the sheen of a pearl, her scarf of the finest gossamer is heavily embroidered with gold, she blazes with jewels, while, in contrast to those ladies whose heads are heavy with powder and pomatum, her auburn locks are simply arranged in ringlets. She looks proud, happy and gracious, but obviously expects deference from all who approach her.

Lady Impey is seated beside her and the ladies

converse amiably, although with a kind of armed neutrality. The battle is over and Mrs. Hastings has won. But the Chief Justice's wife takes her defeat graciously and paves the way for future friendship.

Mrs. Hastings is not the only bride present. Young Mrs. Wheler has lately arrived from England with her husband, who is to fill the seat at the Council table left vacant by the death of General Monson. Mrs. Wheler's hoop is wider than any other in the room ; she breathes the last word in fashion and is the envy and admiration of all the women. How sad it is, they reflect, that it takes months and even years for the latest modes to arrive in Calcutta. Even Mr. Francis is taken with the gay new gown. " I never saw the like in my life," he writes to his wife. He is looking very fine and handsome himself, and is almost able to forgive Mr. Barwell for existing now that he has mulcted him of so much of his " ill-gotten " wealth. " Two years of this will probably raise me to affluence " he has confided sardonically to a friend. He can afford to be generous and has just sent his wife a present of pearls.

But it is not of Mrs. Francis that the host is thinking to-night. The ladies are chattering of the marked attention Mr. Francis is paying to yet another bride. This is young Mrs. Francis Grand, married in the previous June. Mrs. Grand is lovely ; tall and slim and fair, she is like a carnation with the dew on it. And her husband is foolishly flattered that the Senior Member should single her

out for so much attention. But Mrs. Hastings, who is an old friend of the bridegroom, is not quite so easy in her mind about Mr. Francis' tribute to youth and beauty. A shrewd judge of character, she has learned to discriminate between polite gallantry and a deeper feeling.

There are many beauties at the ball. Mrs. Barwell, who was Elizabeth Sanderson, has been married for a year now. Mr. Barwell looks a trifle sheepish when he catches the Governor's glance, for he remembers that business of the troublesome Sarah and how his Elizabeth's father had helped Mr. Hastings to dispose of her. All the gentlemen of Calcutta are agreed that Mr. Barwell is an exceptionally fortunate man, for Miss Sanderson has sacrificed many a heart at her shrine. One of her suitors was Mr. Grand, who handsomely acknowledges that "to this lady's credit it may be recorded that those who had been partial to her were ever treated with esteem and gratitude."

Here is Lady Chambers, whom one of her own sex described as "the most beautiful woman I ever saw," and young Mrs. William Makepeace Thackeray, who was Amelia Webb, but has been married for two years to a writer in the Company. And pretty Mary Touchet, who has come out to stay with her brother Peter. It was she who compared Mr. Francis' compliments to bones! She is surrounded by admirers, of whom Mr. Thomas Motte appears to be the most favoured. Sir John D'Oyly, the very youthful baronet, is leading charming Mrs. Coles to the dance; and young

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Mr. Halhed is looking rather melancholy, for his heart is not in this gay scene but at Chinsura, with the Dutch Governor's daughter, Helena Ribaut. Not even the lively Miss Emma Wrangham, known as the "Chinsura Belle," can interest him, although so many sigh for her favours. Few dance the minuet so gracefully as Miss Wrangham ; as Mr. Hicky proclaimed, "a band of music might have been led with the exactest time by the motion of her foot." But, although Miss Wrangham will dance and laugh and jest, she annoys her suitors by remaining obstinately fancy free.

They dance country-dances, minuets, cotillions . . . up the middle and down again . . . their hoops swaying. Servants stationed about the room wave huge fans of peacock's feathers, for even at this season some cooler air is necessary. A sumptuous supper is laid out in the vast dining-room ; delicate and elaborate dishes have been prepared by the Indian cooks who have learned their art from the French and Italian cooks imported by the wealthy. In the wide verandah outside the supper-room there is a good deal of flurry and fuss. Stout importantly turbaned butlers hustle the lesser table servants who, in their turn, harry their underlings with muttered reflections on their ancestry. Mr. Francis is a martinet ; he will overlook no shortcomings of service or form ; and, besides, the honour of the house is at stake. In one capacity or another a hundred servants are employed in that fine house. Among them there may be a fair proportion of thieves and liars ; but

every one of them would hesitate to bring shame upon his master on such occasion as this.

A quantity of wine is consumed at supper, of which the ladies have their fair share. The younger members of the community grow noisy and pelt one another with bread pills. Then the hookah-bearers enter, each carrying his master's hookah, and soon the air is thick with smoke. Nobody minds this, for the hookah is indispensable at all social gatherings, and is carried even to the theatre and the card-rooms. Some of the young ladies pay their swains the compliment of tasting the hookah, the mouthpiece being politely presented. The bearers of these pipes are important servants ; they accompany their masters everywhere. When Mr. and Mrs. Hastings issue invitations for a concert and supper party at their house in town they request that no other servant should be brought. This is a somewhat surprising request ; for it is the custom to bring a table servant to wait on his master. The consequent confusion may be imagined, each servant snatching dishes to present to the person he regards as the most important there—his master. Mrs. Hastings is wisely endeavouring to break down the custom.

The sounds of revelry float out into the luminous Indian night, and the weird cry of the jackals in the jungle by the river mingles with the music of the violins. There is a confused murmur of voices from the confines of the great tangled garden, where hundreds of servants squat by the waiting palanquins. Patient people ; they are scarcely to

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be pitied, for, to them, night is the same as day, and they can curl up and sleep at any hour, as a dog sleeps. They beguile the hours with talk ; of money, of women, of food and the price of things. But most often they boast of their employers, of their wealth and the splendour of their possessions, their horses and carriages and jewels. . . . So are they true to their salt.

It is a goodly company in that ball-room. They were brave as well as fair, those women of old Calcutta. Wisely they took the goods the gods provided, dancing and gaming through their brief hour. For who could foresee how many of them would be here in the following year ? From these the future was mercifully withheld. None could know that the bride with the wondrous raiment was to wear a shroud before many months were past ; nor how soon young Mrs. Barwell was to lie beneath that sugar-loaf monument in Park Street Cemetery. And how Thomas Motte was to win his Mary, only to find himself deserted and to die lonely and remote. And lovely Mrs. Grand ! Lovers in plenty were to be hers, and her shame proclaimed through Europe. To-night she dances in her innocence, but she will dance to the world's tune until her painted cheeks crack, and she is branded as " a stupid old courtesan."

Who, on that night, could have predicted that the Governor, moving among them so happy and so honoured, would one day fall from his high estate and come to kneel in humiliation before his judges ? And his haughty Marian—how the years were to

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take toll of her pride and wrest from her white neck the jewels in which she took a sensuous delight !

For some the years have kinder fate in store. Coquettish Miss Wrangham is not to remain aloof from matrimony for very long. She finds her mate in Mr. John Bristow, and makes so bright and seductive a matron that she subdues even the cynical Mr. Francis to her charms. . . . "For don't I make a slave of every man I meet?" she asks gaily. And young Halhed is to marry his Helena, and to find that men of temperament have to weather some matrimonial storms before they come into the calm waters of contentment ; while pretty Amelia Thackeray is to see her son's son a famous novelist.

These events lay in the womb of Time, destined yet still unripe. For the present . . . why Mr. Francis is giving a splendid ball . . . dance, lovely ladies, with your fortunate swains . . . up the middle and down again . . . hoops swaying and ribbons flying. . . . Catch at your little hour of forgetfulness, for it will never come again.

CHAPTER V

IN the vestry records of St. John's Church, Calcutta, is a document which briefly states that, on August 8th, 1777, a marriage was solemnised between The Honourable Warren Hastings, Esq., Governor-General of Bengal, and Miss Anna Maria Appolonia Chapusettin. That bald statement has inevitably dovetailed into comment and surmise. Although it is certain that the couple were married by the Reverend William Johnson, Chaplain of Fort William, there is no definite evidence as to where the marriage actually took place. Some speak of splendid wedding festivities, but there is little to support this theory. It is significant that, in an age of assiduous diarists, there is no contemporary record of elaborate celebrations. True, Alexander Macrabie, the liveliest and most painstaking of diarists, had died during the previous winter, but Francis was still wielding a bitter quill. His comments on the romance show his keen, if malicious, interest in Marian.

“To complete the character, as it will probably conclude the history of this extraordinary man, I must inform you that he is to be married shortly to the supposed wife of a German painter with whom he has lived for several years. The lady is turned forty, has children grown up by her pretended husband, from whom she has obtained a divorce under the hand of some German prince. I have always been on good terms with the lady and do not despair of being invited to the wedding. She is an agreeable woman and has been very pretty. My Lord Chief Justice, the most upright of all possible lawyers, is to act the part of father to this second Helen, although his wife has not spoken to her this twelve month.”

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Francis, with the cynic's aptitude for the hurtful half truth, had the knack of slipping between facts to reach his objective. In this case, however, he had gone hopelessly astray. Marian was thirty at the time, not forty, and her eldest child was twelve. The cheap gibe at her "pretended husband" was a gratuitous piece of malice which bore no relation to fact. But, as Marian was married in her maiden name, Francis' sneer has been elevated to an undue significance. The truth of the matter is, perhaps, too simple to please the many who delight in scandal about the great. That Marian was married in the name of Chapusettin is not surprising when it is remembered that the Letter of Divorce expressly states that the former marriage shall be "annulled, void and of no value whatever." Having been granted a decree of nullity and not a divorce she was in the position of never having been married at all.

Sir John Clavering consulted Mr. Francis as to whether he should attend the ceremony, or visit the couple afterwards. He declared himself in favour of doing so, if but to show that his opposition to the Governor was not personal. Whether Mr. Francis advised this conciliatory gesture is not known, but Clavering was in no condition to attend a marriage. He was a very sick man, and by the end of that month joined the ever growing company in South Park Street cemetery. The Governor ordered minute guns, and wrote, "May God forgive him for all the injuries he has heaped upon me, as I forgive him."

Calcutta was divided in its opinion of the match ; there were long faces at the Impey house. Lady Impey had been pleased to be friendly as long as there was no prospect of charming Mrs. Imhoff being exalted to a superior position, but did not relish the thought of being forced into second place in the Settlement. Philip Francis' failure to comment on the wedding festivities suggests that the marriage was quietly celebrated. As they were married by special licence the ceremony was probably held in a private house. This may have been Marian's own house, the fine mansion with balconies overlooking the river. It is certain that the Governor and his wife continued to live here (now 7, Hastings Street) for some years after their marriage.¹

Marian was now at the zenith of her ambitions. In spite of Francis' disparagement she was still beautiful. The years of strain and impatience had added character to her features, stamping beauty over mere prettiness. Utterly feminine, she delighted in external evidence of her glory. This was not lacking. On their marriage Hastings had settled over ten thousand pounds upon her for her personal use, and there were many who, seeking her favour, were prepared to pave the way to it. The choicest jewels of the East were now poured into the lap of the woman whose name had been bandied in the coffee-houses.

Marian moved gracefully, if a little self-con-

¹ The author has stayed in this house, which is reputed to be haunted by Marian Imhoff.

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sciously, through her social circle. Secure in the devotion of her husband, fortified by his prestige, she soon became a powerful social leader. But pomposity was no part of her equipment ; she was gracious and charming in conversation, and had a very fair share of wit. She was too clever not to know when to beat a graceful retreat, as was evidenced by her relations with Lady Impey. On what rock the earlier friendship of the two ladies had broken is not known ; but Francis had truthfully recorded that they had ignored one another during the past year. However, before her marriage Marian magnanimously thought it time to call a truce. The events that led to it are best summarised from Philip Francis' diary :

“ Sup with Hastings at Impey's. Long faces.”

July 9th. “ News of Imhoff's divorce, and hopes of her marriage with Hastings.”

July 12th. “ The Chief Justice very low. His lady enraged at the match, and distressed about the future visits.

N.B. The dames were for a long time bosom friends.”

July 24th. “ An entertainment made on purpose this night at the Governor's to effect a reconciliation between Lady Impey and Madame Chapusettin. The former sends an excuse. A mortal disappointment.”

July 26th. “ Sup at Impey's. Her ladyship swears stoutly that Madame Imhoff shall pay her the first visit—an idea that I don't fail to encourage.”

July 29th. “ Mrs. Imhoff sups at Lady Impey's by way of submission.”

But that Marian did not rise superior to retalia-

tion in kind, is proved by a later entry in Mr. Francis' diary: "January 3rd, 1778. Formal supper at Impey's for Mrs. Wheler. Mrs. Hastings sends a silly excuse, an intended slight for Lady Impey." Both women were young then and affected by the heady social atmosphere of Calcutta, in the calmer future they adjusted their differences and became life-long friends.

Whether or not Marian had been Hastings' mistress will never be known. The fact that does stand out is that, in spirit at least, they had long regarded their interests as mutual and themselves as man and wife. The long years of suffering and anxiety, the freemasonry of pain, had brought about a psychological sympathy which was stronger than passion. In these circumstances they slipped almost unconsciously into married life. Too old to be easily disillusioned—Hastings was now forty-five—they had preserved a zest for living and a great mutual admiration. But marriage had made one important difference; with one stroke of the Registrar's pen the Governor's "fair female friend" had become the first lady of Calcutta. And to say that Marian enjoyed that exalted position is to put it lightly. She revelled in it. With a husband devoted to her every whim, with jewels winking at her from every side, and every glance sweetened by deference, she was indeed a queen.

Marian loved money; not, one acknowledges, for itself, but for the consequence its possession entailed, and for the sake of giving it away. And

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it was on the subject of money that her first dissension with her husband arose. Marian had long been convinced that the Governor was being exploited by his domestic staff. His entertainments were conducted upon a magnificent scale ; but it was obvious to her quick intelligence that there was an enormous amount of waste and " graft " going on. So far as money went Hastings was completely unworldly. Even his generosity can scarcely be accounted a virtue, it came so naturally to him. That he should live up to or beyond his income seemed absolutely normal. But Marian, French by extraction and German by upbringing, had thrift in her blood ; she gave, but never wantonly or without thought. Determined to check extravagance she took domestic matters into her own hands on the occasion of their first party. The result was such as might have been expected. The servants, baulked of their customary perquisites, revenged themselves by providing such mean entertainment that Marian and Hastings were utterly dismayed. There were none of those ornately decorated dishes, those towering edifices of cream and sugar and almonds, the preparations of which had been learned from the French cooks imported from Chandarnagore. Instead there appeared the poorest of fare, yet decked, almost defiantly, in a manner that sought to disguise its cheapness. The Governor was mortified, and he allowed his Marian to know it. She burst into tears, which he kissed away, the while he extracted a promise that never again would she interfere in

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such matters. Since Indian servants know the exact extent to which their masters incomes can be stretched such latitude must be permitted. But, in all other matters, Hastings was ready to rely on Marian's business sense, for which he had a deep admiration.

* * *

Wine is dangerous to the unaccustomed palate, and Marian's head began to whirl in the seductive atmosphere. Mrs. Fay was later to write with truth that "It is easy to see how fully sensible she is of her own consequence . . . she is, indeed, raised to a giddy height." Some might squirm in private, but it was soon accepted that to avoid catching the eye of the Governor's wife might prove costly. Marian expected to be treated with the most profound respect and deference, as Mrs. Fay had detected. This lady was the wife of a dissolute barrister, and had had many exciting adventures, having been captured by Hyder Ali's troops on her voyage to India. She was a prolific although extremely diffuse writer, and recorded some impressions of the country which, although not entirely free from malice and self-pity, are still of value. She visited Marian at the house that Hastings built in Alipore, and remarked that "her appearance is rather eccentric, owing to the circumstance of her beautiful auburn hair being disposed in ringlets, throwing an air of elegant, nay almost infantine simplicity over the countenance. . . . As a foreigner, you know, she may be

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excused for not strictly conforming to our fashions ; besides her rank in the settlement sets her above the necessity of studying anything but the whim of the moment."

Mrs. Fay was a somewhat pathetic figure. Although she faced her many misfortunes bravely, she liked to exact sympathy for them. On the occasion of this visit to Marian she had apparently set her heart on a confidential gossip with the Governor's wife. But Marian, preoccupied with her own affairs, had little inclination for such intimacies. She received Mrs. Fay with her usual graciousness, and insisted upon her staying to dinner—which, in those times, was served at the uncomfortable hour of five o'clock ! But when Mrs. Fay began to tell of her adventures and misfortunes Marian showed little sympathy ; in fact she hinted rather strongly that the lady had brought her troubles upon herself by venturing on such an expedition out of mere curiosity. Poor Mrs. Fay, who had undertaken the journey in the hope of restraining by her presence the intemperance and extravagance of her dissipated husband, and in her own words "preserving him from distruction," was hurt and disappointed, but too loyal to explain matters.

"I could not help feeling vexed at Mrs. Hastings' observation," she says. "To say the least of it it was unfeeling ; but I excuse her," she adds with spiteful magnanimity. "For those basking in the lap of prosperity can little appreciate the sufferings or make allowance for the errors of the unfortunate,

whom they regard as being almost beings of another order."

Hastings House was the scene of this encounter, although Mrs. Fay describes it as taking place at *Belvedere*. The house, which Hastings had built in the comfortable tradition of Calcutta houses of the time, was small but stately. Double-storied, with a handsome porch, and deep verandahs, it was surrounded by a garden well laid out with flowering trees and shrubs, for which Calcutta is famous. In May, when Mrs. Fay presented her letter of introduction, these would have been at the height of their blossoming season, flaming in gold and purple and pink. But Mrs. Fay, annoyed with her hostess, could not give unreserved praise even here : " The gardens are said to be very tastefully laid out, but how far this report is accurate I had no opportunity of judging ; the windows being all as it were hermetically closed ; sashes, blinds and every opening, except where *tatties* were placed to exclude the hot wind. This surprised me very much, but I understand that no method is so effectual for that purpose." The house, too, did not meet with her unqualified approval, although she allowed that it was " a perfect bijou, most superbly fitted up with all that affluence can display," but she adds that " It is still deficient in that simple elegance which the wealthy so seldom attain from the circumstance of not being obliged to search for effect without much cost, which those but moderately rich find to be indispensable."

Marian was kind but careless ; she pressed her



WARREN HASTINGS AND MRS. HASTINGS

(by Zoffany)

In the Victoria Memorial Hall, Calcutta. Bequeathed by Miss Marian Winter.

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visitor to stay, but was not disposed to confidences.

"I was not permitted to take my departure until the evening," said Mrs. Fay, "when the fair lady of the mansion dismissed me with many professions of kindness, of which I knew how to estimate the value."

One might censure Marian for her indifference to the troubles of another, but it is understandable that she should have felt bored with the woes of a casual visitor. Mrs. Fay mentions that "next morning we received an invitation to the ball given annually on the King's Birthday." She declined it "on the plea of ill-health," and knew that her husband would not attend such functions. This sounds like pique, but the circumstances of the two women were so sharply contrasted that Mrs. Fay's refusal to enter such exalted circles was probably judicious.

Marian's dress was always planned to achieve the best and most dazzling effect. This was accentuated by the drab attire of her consort. An observer of the time has said that of a piece with his simple mode of life was the simplicity of the Governor's dress, contrasting vividly with the state he maintained in his public appearances; the mounted bodyguard, the eight aides-de-camp, and the retinue of native servants served to add to the astonishment of newcomers on finding this same Governor Hastings, whom they have heard so much of, a plain looking man like any of us "with a brown coat." But although the Governor had little thought for his own clothes, he took pride in his

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wife's splendour. He even found time, in the midst of his multifarious duties and cares, to write verses descriptive of her gowns :

“ Flowers, Ribbands, Lappets, Feathers shaking
And cap that cost three weeks in making,
Pearls all in rows and pearls in drops
And brilliant pins set thick as hops . . .
Gay gown and Stomacher so fine
And petticoat of clouds divine. . . .”

These lines conjure up a picture of Marian in what her husband called her “ gaudy charms.” A tale is told of an emissary from the Court of Lucknow who visited the Governor, bringing some presents in the customary Eastern manner. He felt a trifle dismayed when, shown into the Governor's presence, to find Marian there, playing with two kittens which she had thrown into a bowl of pearls worth many thousands of rupees. The little creatures could not find a foothold among the jewels, and their antics amused Marian greatly. In her ears she wore diamond drops of great size and worth, and, in consequence of this display, Bahar Ali Khan felt diffident about the presents he proposed to offer. There were some jewels among them, but the Governor would accept only some phials of *attar*. Hastings at all times discouraged the acceptance of valuable presents, but Marian was of another mind. The Indian has the gracious art of giving. Even bribes can be made to take on a pleasantly ambiguous complexion in that country. The only stipulation Mrs. Hastings made was that the offering should not be presented in a crude or

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mercenary form. In a letter to Sir Elijah Impey she was emphatic on this point :

“ . . . I have heard from Mr. Middleton, but not to my satisfaction ; it was as much as I can recollect of it to the following [*sic*] purpose : ‘ The Nabob had intended to send you a present of horses, elephants, palanqueens, etc., etc., but I told him that they would be of no use to you, that he had better send something which you might be able to wear, to which he agreed ; but as he had then nothing by him that was worth your acceptance he requested you to please yourself at Benares, and that he would pay for it ; the sum which he allowed was one lakh of rupees ; ’ but I rejected it, as it appeared mean to me to accept a present in that mercenary form.”

No doubt the Nawab Vizier's present was eventually accepted, although in what form is not recorded.

Marian's passion for jewels is exemplified in a description of her appearance given by a young soldier who met her some years later in Benares. Her gown on this occasion could not, he computes, have cost less than twenty-five thousand pounds.

“ A black satin riding jacket and petticoat, the jacket and the bottom of the petticoat edged with pearls . . . the buttons of the sleeves were diamonds. On her left shoulder was a valuable diamond star, and two large diamonds marked the length of her waist. Her under-jacket or waistcoat was of white satin, ornamented with diamond buttons of a good size. Her hat was black, edged with large pearls ; the button and loop were of diamonds, and could not be worth less than from four to five thousand pounds. . . . Pendant to a black feather which nodded over her left eye was a large drop diamond, and in front of the hat was another of a large size. In short, it was the most

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elegant and costly undress that was, perhaps, ever worn ; and Mrs. Hastings, who happened to be in better health than usual, looked like an angel."

The term "undress" does not seem appropriate to this magnificent apparel. It is scarcely possible that such glittering array was donned for *riding* as the writer suggests, but probably Marian wore such attire when she boarded the State barge on the river. This barge was in keeping with such a gown, being remarkably ornate in structure and colour. It was painted in green and gold, its head a spread eagle, its stern a tiger's head and body. There were silk curtains and awning, and the barge was propelled by twenty oarsmen dressed in scarlet and wearing rose-coloured turbans. With such state, with her two "coffrees" to waft fans above her, with jewels beyond the dreams of avarice, it was little wonder that Marian was "stuck up with all the costly appendages of the East," as Hicky, the rascal printer who founded the first newspaper of Bengal, described her.

This paper, the *Bengal Gazette*, was a scurrilous publication, dull and vulgar from the first, and growing in pruriency as it found a public. It specialised in such headlines as "Thoughts on the times, but chiefly on the profligacy of our women, and its causes." Hastings, after enduring the publication for a time, took steps to prevent its circulation through Bengal by refusing to allow it to be sent through the General Post Office. In consequence the owner and editor grew more venomous than ever, dealing almost entirely in rank per-

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sonalities, directed at the Governor and the Chief Justice through their wives. Such paragraphs as this now appeared : " A displaced civilian asking his friend the readiest means of procuring lucrative appointments was told ' Pay your constant devoirs to Marian Alleypore.' "

One of Hicky's gibes at Marian took the form of a left-handed compliment. Describing her appearance at a masquerade, he says she was " habited like a Tartarean [*sic*] princess, almost sinking under the weight of pearls and diamonds. The brilliancy of her dress was only eclipsed by her usual urbanity and vivacity." Such a tribute from the malicious Hicky was praise indeed ! But even Francis had acknowledged that " the lady is really an accomplished woman. She behaves with perfect propriety in her new station, and deserves every mark of respect." With Francis captivated the unwilling Hicky was forced to sheathe his claws.

The publication lasted for two years only, closing down when Hicky was thrown into prison for debt. From here he wrote many begging letters to Hastings, continuing even after the Governor had left Bengal. Hicky was evidently relying upon the well-known benevolence of Hastings and the indiscriminate nature of his charities.

* * *

Two years after Marian's marriage Calcutta was treated to one of its most delectable and provocative scandals. Marian, who had for so long endured the pointed glance, the half-veiled allusion,

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was now in a position to enjoy, if she chose, the spectacle of another victim.

Francis Grand, Karl Imhoff's shipmate in the *Marquis of Rockingham*, had returned to Calcutta. Grand, although passionate and arrogant, had some pleasant social qualities. These made him a welcome visitor at the house of M. Chevalier, Governor of Chandernagore, the tiny French settlement once conquered by Clive and then somewhat sulkily restored. Here Grand met a beautiful young woman, Catherine Verlé. Hastings had always liked the young man, and Barwell was sufficiently obliging to find him a well-paid job in the Salt Revenue Department. "To alleviate the sufferings of a young couple, ardent to be united," was the good-natured Barwell's aim. Nepotism and favouritism was rife in Calcutta even though the Governor made some attempt to put it down. Women born in the country ripen early, and Catherine Verlé was fifteen when she married. Born in India of French parents, tall and slim, radiantly fair, her beauty was to become world famous. She was destined to be courted, adored, flouted and eventually neglected ; but at this time she was but a simple child, ready to fall in love with the first man who crossed her path. Her beauty and simplicity recommended her to Marian's notice, and both the Governor and his wife made much of the charming-child.

Suddenly the smouldering scandal blazed. On a night in December following the ball at Mr. Francis' house young Mr. Grand left his own

little garden house in Alipore to attend one of Barwell's fortnightly suppers. This was a stag affair, and Mrs. Grand was left in the company of her ayah, and the house in the care of a head servant. Scarcely had Grand sat down to table than news was brought to him that Mr. Francis had been caught at his house in compromising circumstances. It seemed that a ladder had been found against the wall of Mrs. Grand's room. A locked door, an ayah dismissed on some frivolous pretext, and the situation was ripe for scandal. Mr. Francis had attempted to bribe his captors, and by the time that Grand arrived at the house he had escaped.

In an interview which Catherine "entreated" with her husband next day, Grand heard what he described as "an unvarnished relation of the arts employed for the seduction of a stranger, attained only to her sixteenth year." Her lamentations do not appear to have softened the heart of the outraged husband, for he bundled the poor child off to stay with her relations at Chandernagore, and sent a challenge to Mr. Francis. The latter refused to accept it, protesting that his conscience was at ease. He probably hoped to hush up the scandal, which, so far, was known to few. The Governor was aware of what had taken place, for Grand, in his first excitement, had confided in Major Palmer, Hastings' secretary. Francis maintained, to the end of his life, that he was not, at that time, a successful lover. He had entered Grand's house, but the lady had not proved amenable, the alarm

had been given, and he had retreated in good order.

It would have been better for Francis to have accepted Grand's challenge ; for the baffled husband took the matter to Court. He brought an action against Francis for " criminal conversation " with his wife, claiming the staggering damages of a hundred-and-sixty thousand pounds. To the lady who, many years later, became Comtesse Talleyrand, must be awarded the distinction of having had her virtue assessed higher in a monetary sense than any other woman before or since.

The case came before Justices Impey, Hyde and Chambers early in 1780. The form of the old pleadings did not err on the side of delicacy or lack of frankness, and much dirty linen was washed in Court. Indian servants gave their usual vague and contradictory evidence and the case dragged on. The sordid affair ended in a verdict for Grand, with damages of something like six thousand pounds, and left Francis still further inflamed against Sir Elijah Impey. His resentment extended to the Governor, who, he declared, used the circumstance to prejudice him in the eyes of the Directors of the Company. But he thought it handsome of Mr. Wheler to stand by him in such a " cursed place " as Calcutta.

Ever hungry for distraction, Calcutta now seized upon this new sensation. The matter of Sarah Bonner and Barwell was nothing compared to this. Naturally, the opinion of the Governor's wife was tacitly invited, and would have been respected.

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But Marian had suffered too much in the past to have much to say now. She was able to occupy the grand stand without danger to herself. But her heart was touched, for she liked the pretty girl ; and her natural good taste was offended by the manner in which Francis Grand was now pouring his matrimonial grievances into any available ear. Philip Francis had followed Catherine to Chandernagore, and, by the June of that year, had established her at Hooghly, a small settlement up river.

It is noteworthy that this sensational law suit was not commented upon in the *Bengal Gazette*, that early specimen of the gutter press. At no time, in fact, during the short life of the paper was Francis attacked by the impudent editor. The conclusion is inescapable that Francis had some possibly sinister influence over the exuberant Hicky. Here was a ribald news sheet which set out to expose social evils ; yet Francis, whose conduct on more than one occasion provided an obvious target for Hicky's moral platitudes, was apparently immune from attack.

The scurrilous outbursts, all of them badly expressed, were of too vulgar a nature to have been the work of Francis' own pen, but they may have been instigated by him, and it is certain that he had some inexplicable power over the editor and owner of the publication.

* * *

The year of 1780 wore on. Hyder Ali was

intriguing with the French and over-running the Carnatic, and Hastings had much with which to occupy his mind. But there was comparative peace on the Council. Clavering was dead, and Monson, too, had followed his beloved Lady Anne to the grave. Barwell was anxious to take his gains out of India, but was not disposed to leave Hastings unsupported. He knew himself to be the Governor's balance on the Council, although Wheler, who had begun by disliking Hastings had been, to some extent, won over by the latter's charm and quiet good sense.

Hastings and Barwell thought they had relieved the situation by extracting from Francis a promise that he would support the former's policy in all things pertaining to India. This Francis gave. He was growing increasingly weary of his situation, as he called it, and was looking towards England. The deaths of his colleagues had depressed him. "I do not intend to die like a rat in Bengal," he said.

In the meantime he was constantly visiting the lovely Catherine at Hooghly, and recording cryptic Latin quotations in his diary. The establishment up river does not seem to have prejudiced him very greatly in a social way. Those were not censorious times, and several of the great ladies of Calcutta continued to visit the erring lady. Lady Chambers, who had the kindest heart in the world, was one of these. Marian, unwilling to triumph over a fallen enemy, sent Francis an invitation to dinner. This he chose to regard as "an unaccountable circumstance, and subject to infinite speculation." But

he accepted. There is no doubt that Francis had charm of manner. It was said that Lady Impey yielded readily to it, while even the level-headed Marian found it difficult to be angry with this disturber of the peace.

Marian might not have been so complacent had she known more of Francis' relations at this time with his patient little wife in England.

"Your staying in India one year more is the most dreadful disappointment to me," wrote Mrs. Francis. "What can detain you, my dear Philip? . . . All my happiness depends upon seeing you . . . separation, I was but too sure, for almost seven years, would make a great alteration in your affection, and . . . I fear it has a very great one."

And again: "In your last letter you say that I am always complaining either of sickness or want of money or other difficulties . . . but I regret that I cannot bring our expenses within the sum you wished and thought enough . . ."

Francis had been generous to his wife, and had written her loving and affectionately rallying letters. But a rift seems to have occurred during that last year of his office in India. And, for this, it is impossible not to blame his love affair with Mrs. Grand.

It is interesting to note from his wife's letters that she lived in dread of Francis being made Governor-General of India! "How grieved should I be if that should happen. My joy would then be over, for I should have small hope of ever seeing you again. . . . I trust you will not be tempted by

such glare, and will resist its greatness for the sake of making me happy."

Marian's good will towards Mr. Francis was to be short lived. A seeming peace might have been declared on the Council, but Francis was not ready to submit unconditionally. "The dreadful aspect of our affairs in this country has forced me to yield to a temporary pacification with Mr. Hastings . . . since it has pleased the Demon who presides over England to continue and confirm Mr. Hastings in Absolute Power . . ."

The widowed Barwell had left India, not, we understand, without making some tentative advances to the beautiful Mrs. Grand! and Hastings was now alone. Early in July 1780 Marian was told by her husband that he was disposed to pay a State visit to the Governor of Chinsura, the Dutch settlement twenty-five miles up river. He said no more, but, with an anxious brow, proceeded to some voluminous correspondence. Perhaps Marian did not notice his pre-occupation. She was planning fresh bedazzlements for the inhabitants of the Dutch settlement; also she would have an opportunity of visiting her friend, Mrs. Motte. For pretty Mary Touchet had married her adorer the previous summer, and was now living at Hooghly, a few miles from Chinsura.

The Governor and his lady left in their state barge, being accorded a salute of twenty-one guns from the Danish settlement of Serampore, and the same from the Dutch settlement. Marian was excited by the trip, but Hastings was still pre-

occupied. Well he might be, for the correspondence upon which he had been engaged was certain to have momentous results.

Francis had broken his pledge of co-operation. To the sending of Sir Eyre Coote to quell the disorder on the Malabar Coast he had tacitly agreed ; but when Hastings wanted to send further troops to the Jumna Francis declared that his promise no longer held good. Together with Wheler he framed a minute to this effect, to be read in the Council Chamber. It was the reply to this minute that had occupied Hastings before he started for Chinsura. There he must have brooded on the matter, but he remained determined and unshaken. The minute was not at once delivered, but was probably taken to Chinsura with him. Hastings breathed no word to Marian of his intention ; this was a matter in which she could not help and would, almost certainly, hinder.

On August 14th Hastings returned to Calcutta, and wrote instantly to Marian. " The only news of consequence is that I am determined to remain as long as I choose, but with the same associate." Marian, knowing of the dissensions that had split the Council for years past, took the words lightly ; but from later events it is evident that the Governor had finally decided to present the minute, of which Marian did not know. Like all Hastings' writings it was lengthy and somewhat diffuse. But certain provocative sentences stand out for quotation. The Governor treated the matter as entirely concerned with Francis, whose malice he well knew. . . .

“ . . . By the sanction of this engagement, and the liberal profession which accompanied it, I was seduced to part with the friend (to whose generous support steadfastly yielded in the course of six years I am indebted for the existence of the little power which I have ever possessed in that long and disgraceful period), to throw myself on the mercy of Mr. Francis, and the desperate hazard of his integrity. . . . I judge of his public conduct by his private, which I have found void of truth and honour. . . . The only redress for a fraud for which the law has made no provision is the exposure of it.”

Flaming words these, words that, in those days, could have but one outcome. Hastings sent a copy of the minute to Francis on the evening before the day on which it was to be officially read in the Council Chamber. The answer was obvious. Francis sat with a frozen face throughout the meeting. In an inner room he read his reply which concluded with the sentence : “ You have left me no alternative but to demand personal satisfaction for the affronts you have offered me.”

Hastings replied calmly : “ I expected that demand, and am prepared to answer it.” To him it was the culmination of those years of strife ; and, he hoped, the conclusion. His mind was full of thoughts of Marian (“ you have occupied all my thoughts for these two days past unremittingly,” he wrote her), but, as always, he was ready to dare for his masters, the Company.

In his great echoing house at Alipore Philip Francis sat, late that night of August 16th—burning letters and papers, “ in case of the worst.” In his own house close by the Governor was writing

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a letter to the woman he loved. This he sealed and enclosed, with directions as to the circumstances in which it was to be delivered to her. Many years later, when Marian Hastings was an old woman, she found this letter :

“ MY BELOVED MARIAN,” wrote Hastings,

“ My heart bleeds to think what your sufferings and feelings must be, if ever this letter shall be delivered into your hands. You will too soon learn the occasion of it. On my part it has been unavoidable.—I shall leave nothing which I regret to lose but you, nor in my last moments shall I feel any other affliction. Let it be a consolation to you to know that at this moment I have the most grateful sense of all your past kindness, and of the unremitted proofs which you have daily and hourly afforded me of your affection.—For these may God reward you ! I know not how.—How much I have loved you, how much beyond all that Life can yield I still love you He only knows.—Do not, my Marian, forget me ; but cherish my remembrance to the latest hour of your life, as I should yours were it my lot, and my misery, to survive you. I cannot write all that I feel and that my heart is full of.

“ Adieu, my best wife, and most beloved of women. May the God of Heaven bless you and support you ! My last thoughts will be employed on you.—Remember and love me. Once more farewell !

“ Your WARREN HASTINGS.”

* * *

As the first signs of the coming dawn streaked the sky, Warren Hastings and his second, Colonel Pearse, Commandant of the Artillery, arrived at the chosen meeting place. This was a quiet, weed-grown alley off one of the roads of Alipore. Some tall trees near to it had been named the “ trees of

destruction " on account of the duels that had been fought there. Francis did not arrive until an hour later, when the light was full. The seconds produced pistols, and measured the agreed distance of fourteen paces. When the pistols were handed to the combatants, Francis observed that he was quite unacquainted with their use, having never fired a pistol in his life. To this Hastings replied quietly that he had no advantage over Mr. Francis in that respect, as he could not recollect having fired one more than once or twice. Truly a strange admission in a duelling age.

The agreement was that they should fire simultaneously, but, for some reason, or through some mischance, Francis fired first. The shot went wide. Hastings aimed calmly and deliberately, and Francis fell to the ground, crying that he was a dead man.

" Good God ! I hope not," exclaimed Hastings.

CHAPTER VI

WHEN Philip Francis fell, Warren Hastings ran to his side, murmuring words that no one could catch.

"You will best know how this affects your affairs," replied Francis. "I advise you to look to yourself."

"I hope and believe that the wound is not mortal," said Hastings calmly. "In the event of any unfortunate accident happening I intend to at once place myself in the hands of the Sheriff."

Colonel Pearse had gone to call servants, and the two men were left alone, except for some inquisitive old coolie women who gathered in the near distance. Hastings stood beside his fallen antagonist until Colonel Pearse returned with a sheet with which to bind the wound, and said he had arranged for a bed to carry the injured man. Francis murmured that he wished to be taken to his own house and the party started off. Discovering that a flood had covered the road, they were forced to turn back, and Hastings urged that Francis should be taken to his house near by. This offer Francis refused, and was carried to Belvedere, then occupied by Major Tolly. The Governor-General returned to Calcutta and ordered his own surgeon to attend Mr. Francis. Later that day he sent to ask when he might visit his fallen rival, but the request was refused through Colonel Watson, who was enjoined to put the refusal "as civilly as possible." Immediately Hastings arrived at his own house he

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penned, with a remarkably steady hand, a letter to his wife :

“ MY DEAREST MARIAN,

“ I have desired Sir John Day to inform you that I have this morning had a meeting with Mr. Francis, who has received a wound in his side, but I hope not dangerous. I shall know the state of it presently and will write you again. He is at Belvedere, and Drs. Campbell and Francis are both gone to attend him there. I am *well* and *unhurt*. But you must be content to hear this good from me ; you cannot see me. I cannot leave Calcutta while Mr. Francis is in any danger. But I wish you to stay at Chinsura. I hope in a few days to have the pleasure of meeting you there. Make my compliments to Mr. Ross, but, do not mention what has passed. My Marian, you have occupied all my thoughts for these two days past unremittingly.

“ Yours ever, my most beloved,

“ W. H.”

Hastings suffered some slight qualms of conscience at having kept knowledge of the impending duel from Marian, who was accustomed to be consulted in all matters pertaining to themselves, and even to the Company. That evening he wrote again, assuring her that Francis was in no danger. The bullet had entered the thigh, missing all vital parts. The surgeons had cut out the ball and had bled the unfortunate patient twice, a drastic remedy for a man who had already lost a considerable quantity of blood. With the news that Francis was on the way to recovery, Hastings sent his wife some money, and again requested her not yet to return to Cal-

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cutta, pointing out that he could not rejoin her as soon as he had hoped to do.

In spite of her great courage Marian was by no means immune from a weakness common to her sex. When alarmed she lost her temper. So few of her letters at this period have been preserved that we have no means of knowing in what terms she answered her devoted husband's request. His reply suggests that her anxiety for him had yielded to exasperation at being kept in the dark :

"MY DEAR MARIAN,

"I have received yours. You must not be angry ; perhaps it is best that what has passed has passed, and it may be productive of future good. My desire that you should not leave Chinsura proceeded only from the apprehension lest, by a precipitate departure, your spirits might be agitated and your health affected. . . . Do now as you please. . . . You will find me free from both sickness, anxiety and troubles. . . . Mr. Francis continues well, and I pronounce his cure certain. . . ."

He then sends compliments to Mrs. Motte and others, makes no mention of love for Marian herself, and ends with a cold

"Yours,

"W. H."

A week later they were still not on the best of terms.

"I have received your angry letter . . .", he says, but takes little notice of the anger. Instead, he tells her that he is sending her horse Beauty to her and will "bespeak your two coffrees" (he means African slaves—Kaffirs). The rest of his

letters are concerned mainly with her health (a subject on which he was always anxious), and one ends : " Adieu, my beloved ; a sound and sweet sleep be your portion for this night. I will be your nurse to-morrow night."

It is abundantly clear that in the early days of her marriage Marian was inclined to be captious. She had suffered so much and so long for her ultimate happiness that it humiliated her not to have been a party to this highly dramatic episode. Feeling herself cheated of a share in one of her " incomparable husband's " most romantic gestures, denied the luxury of worrying, she rated Hastings for sparing her. But Hastings could apply balm with an unerring touch. " I do not care for your being sullen," he wrote once, " I had rather you should be so—a little—on such occasions." No women could resist such disarming suavity !

Francis was sufficiently recovered from his wound to attend Council in the middle of September. He and Hastings met with great civility on either side, although Francis was already endeavouring to persuade Wheler to assist him in attacking the Governor " horse and foot." It is noteworthy that no comment on the duel appeared in the local news sheet. This suppression could not have been out of consideration for the Governor (" Sir Francis Wronghead " or " The Grand Mogul " as Hicky alternately dubbed him), for Hastings' feelings were never spared Mr. Hicky's malicious shafts. The omission to pillory Francis at the time of the Grand scandal might possibly have been an over-

sight. The case came before the Courts in February, the paper having begun its short life in January of that year. But this was August, a season when news runs short. Yet the duel between two of the most prominent members of the community received not even a passing reference.

Marian, however, continued, if indirectly, to supply news to the avid printing presses of Calcutta. She was addicted to the dangerous practice of match-making, and more than one of the matrimonial pies stirred by her was fated to prove indigestible. Francis had a laughing gibe at this propensity of Marian's :

“ Sir John Day seems to be excessively hurt at the marriage of Ramus¹ with Miss Vernet. He says it has been hurried in the most extraordinary way by Mrs. Hastings. The lady, since she married poor Hastings, had taken a strange turn to match-making. She now knows what it is to be married.”

To Marian, full of this enthusiasm for pairing her fellow-creatures, young Mary Touchet presented an irresistible temptation. She was a winsome, wide-eyed girl, and Marian was determined that so delicate a flower should not be left to bloom alone in Calcutta. Apart from such feminine interest in the girl, Mary had another claim on Marian's consideration. It was with Mary's mother that the Imhoff boys had been left in England, and young Peter Touchet was now a writer with the Company. Some years earlier Francis Grand had introduced a friend named Thomas Motte to

¹ Lady Day was a Miss Ramus.

Marian's notice. Motte was now paying the pretty Mary a good deal of attention, and under Marian's benevolent eye meetings were arranged and the curtain was raised on the eternal tragi-comedy.¹

The marriage, like many other arranged matches, opened with mutual esteem and quickly lapsed into apathy. Motte was either unworthy of his pretty wife or he was a somewhat injured and neglected husband, for he does not seem to have enjoyed much of her society. Marian, with feminine inconsistency, contributed to this state of affairs by monopolising the young wife, who soon became her constant companion. Hastings appears to have sympathised with the unlucky husband without condemning Mary Motte too severely. "I wish Motte had as much of the warmth of a lover, but he is in the right of it a little," he wrote to Marian shortly after the duel. In his heart Hastings found it difficult to reproach the pretty young woman who so obviously admired him ; in fact he enjoyed the harmless excitements of a very mild flirtation. His Marian was too much a woman of the world, too sure of her own empire, to have any foolish doubts of her own supremacy. There are, in Hastings' letters, numerous references to the great affection which existed between the trio. In

¹ Francis Grand, who met Thomas Motte in Benares during his (Grand's) first term of service, described him as "a man whose philanthropy, thorough acquaintance with India, diversity of historical anecdote, general knowledge and information, joined to a cheerful and sociable disposition, with the truest hospitality, rendered him one of the most pleasing companions."

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one of these Hastings writes : " I desire you to acquaint Mrs. Motte that I intend to make a figure—and no inconsiderable one—in the waistcoat which she did me the honour to give me."

With Marian Hastings the making of matches was not so much a craving for vicarious excitement as a genuine instinct for the dramatic aspects of life. She had bitterly resented her enforced inactivity and ignorance at the time of the duel ; but the hour now approached when she would be afforded opportunity to prove not only her fortitude but her strong common sense.

* * *

The protracted war in the Carnatic had proved unexpectedly expensive, and Hastings was hard put to it to replenish the Company's coffers. In this extremity he turned with some confidence to Cheyte Singh, Rajah of Benares, with whom the Company had a feudatory contract. The Governor-General's demand for money and horses was a natural one, for the Rajah was wealthy, and the Company had engaged to aid him in any emergency.

The Rajah's replies to Hastings' request were florid, almost fulsome, but evasive, and the treasury could not be replenished with salaams. The necessary men, money and horses were still withheld. Hastings bit his lip and decided to act. He had long been disturbed by reports of disorder and lawlessness prevailing in Benares. Now seemed the time to convince the Rajah of his obligations both to the Company and to his own people.

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The Governor-General set out on his journey with his usual self-confidence. He was accompanied by some five hundred sepoys, a remarkably small force for such a mission. His personal staff included, besides his secretary, Stephen Sullivan and Captain Sands, A.D.C., that much injured husband, Francis Grand. Marian, accompanied by the inevitable Mrs. Motte and Mrs. Sullivan, travelled with him. The month was July and Calcutta was at its most oppressive. Farther north lay comparative coolness, and the pleasures of a river journey. Hastings might well have been feeling irritated, but small thought of a punitive expedition crossed his mind, while to Marian it was merely in the nature of an interesting adventure.

The stately barge moved leisurely up the river, the villagers crowding thickly on the banks of the Ganges to watch the great man pass. No doubt the simple souls who had expected to see some resplendent person in the far-famed "Warren 'Asteen" were disappointed to find the Governor a plain, almost insignificant little man. The party halted for a few days at Murshedabad, where the Mani Begum was delighted to again see her "beloved Mrs. Hastings."

Marian went in state to visit the Mani Begum, the Jewel Lady. She also was a jewel lady, for, in compliment to the widow of Mir Jaffir, she had put on some of her most magnificent gems.

The Begum, seated on a pile of cushions, received her guest graciously. They had much in common, the slim white woman and the swarthy old one,

grown fat with over many sweetmeats. They were both intelligent and determined, clear-sighted to their own advantage ; both haughty but faithful. The Begum professed extravagant affection for the Governor's wife. . . . " My beloved daughter . . . light of mine eyes. . . ."

Allowing for such flowers of expression, it may well be that the ex-dancing girl cherished some real regard for the wife of the man to whom she had always been friendly, and who had placed her in the position she now held.

The great rambling palace where such scenes of cruelty and bloodshed had been enacted presented the appearance of mingled squalor and grandeur, which is characteristic of some Eastern palaces. The great echoing rooms were full of precious china and porcelain set side by side with tawdry ornaments, furniture of delicately carved ivory and tattered cushions. White ants ate the tapestries and " fish insects " nibbled the pictures, while hordes of chattering servants in untidy robes filled the courtyards and hung their clothing on the marble statuary or over the red-lacquered railings of the balconies.

Presents were exchanged. There were sarrees thick with *kincob* gold for Marian and *attar* for the Governor, who would accept no richer presents. For Marian there were some pictures of Rajahs and their Ranees, painted on finest rice paper ; fine fierce men and lovely pale women with *kohl*-rimmed eyes, and priceless jewels hanging on their foreheads. Marian had brought a scarf embroidered by her own hands, which she begged the Begum to accept.

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Sweetmeats were handed round : flat cakes of almonds pounded smooth with camel's milk and scented with roses, sugared cakes rolled in caraway seeds, brittle *jellabis* made of sugar and butter. A servant brought a thick wreath of white waxen jessamine and tuberoses and the Begum herself placed it round Marian's neck, the hot heavy scent of the flowers combining with the flavour of hookah smoke, which hung about the airless apartment.

Many compliments were exchanged before the two women parted, and a large retinue crowded round to see the Governor's wife embark in her barge with the rose coloured curtains. There was talk in the shabby old palace for days afterwards ; talk of the great lady's beauty, her jewels, her silks, the nodding plumes of her hat. Life in the palace was dull in those days of diminished glory. The Begum was growing old and cross ; the young Nawab was a sickly youth and went in awe of the old woman, his guardian. With the reduction of his allowance and the passing of the Capital, Murshedabad was a place of forgotten glory.

* * *

Voyaging on to Bhagulpore they met with the Impeys, who were touring Bengal, and Lady Impey elected to accompany the party to Monghyr. She and Marian, having fought out their earlier battles, were now completely reconciled ; a friendship that was to last through life. At Monghyr, the picturesque little fortified station that lies on the Ganges, some eighty miles from Patna, Hastings

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was suddenly seized with a panic, or a premonition, and refused to allow the ladies to go any farther. He admitted afterwards, that he had acted on impulse ; but Marian, all unheeding of what might lie ahead, was content to be left in that pleasant spot with her lively friends. Ruined palaces, deserted forts, great rambling gardens, deep tanks overshadowed with trees, all these engaged her interest in that stronghold of departed glory. It was decided that Captain Sands should be left to look after the ladies, while Grand and Sullivan should accompany the Governor to Benares.

The wisdom of Hastings' decision quickly became apparent. The Rajah came as far as Buxar to meet the Governor-General, and instantly the two men clashed. The Rajah offered his turban as the customary sign of fealty to the Government, but his retinue of two thousand men seemed to Hastings excessive, and in the nature of a thinly veiled gesture of defiance. Brushing aside the proffered turban he repeated his demand for tribute. But Cheyte Singh continued to return evasive replies, and the Governor, losing patience, placed the Rajah under arrest in his own palace.

It was an extreme and unwise step which only great good fortune could have rendered successful. As it was, Hastings was not strong enough to support this arbitrary blow to the Rajah's esteem. By a singular lack of foresight the guards placed over the prisoner were unarmed. Through his own officers Cheyte Singh managed to summon troops from across the river who fell upon the

unarmed sepoys and massacred them almost to a man. In the confusion the Rajah escaped over the city wall by means of a rope made of turbans. His suite and his treasure were also got away by some means, and the party took refuge in the fort of Bideghur, forty miles away.

The Rajah was now in a position to spread disaffection through the province, while Hastings remained a virtual prisoner in Benares, anxiously awaiting reinforcements from Chunar. To make matters worse a rash and unauthorised attempt to storm a neighbouring village proved unsuccessful, the British being fired upon from the houses. This news spread and added to the general disaffection. The Governor-General was now in extreme danger. Attack might be expected at any moment, and his officers urged him to retreat to the fort of Chunar. Supplies in Benares were running short, and the sepoys were disheartened by the disaster. In these circumstances Hastings gave a reluctant consent, and with his remnant of troops moved by night to Chunar. The baggage and equipment was, however, lost on the way, and the retreating party arrived with nothing but the clothes they stood up in.

Hastings' first thought was for Marian, and to spare her alarm on his account. He sent an account of the retreat to Captain Sands, in letters rolled in quills and concealed on his messengers, while to Marian he wrote by the same means :

"I am at Chunar and in perfect health. I entreat you to return to Calcutta. Be confident, my beloved, all is now well, and will be better. I have no fears but for you."

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With kindly consideration for the anxieties of Mrs. Sullivan he wrote, in his next letter, "Sullivan eats, drinks, and is merry . . ." and again : "Sullivan is and has been at all times well, and in laughing spirits."

"My danger was great, but it is all past. . . . I am unhappy until I know where you are. . . .

"P.S. I use this blank to tell you that I never loved you as I loved you in the midst of my greatest troubles, and have suffered more in my fears for you than I hope I ever shall for myself."

Hastings, with his profound knowledge of the Indian temperament, had sensed the spirit in which the news of his reversal would be received by the masses. He had not under-estimated the effect. Panic ran through the province, touching even Bengal. News travelled in the usual mysterious Indian fashion. In the villages it was said that the great Governor-General was dead, and the British rule was at an end. Some there were who had seen his head and right hand hung over the gates of the fortress at Benares. Soon the province was chanting the jingle with which ayahs sing their charges to sleep to this day :

"With howdahs on horses,
Saddles on elephants
Very quickly departed
Warren Hasteen. . . ."

In point of fact the retreat was made in perfect order, but the libel has droned on through the years.

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from impending ruin by her independent fortitude and presence of mind."

To Marian he wrote, in one of his quill letters :

"You are safe, and I am happy, but do not remain even at Bhagulpore if you hear any alarms go on. . . . I was ever happy in my Marian, I am now proud of her. The trial has shown the world that worth of which I only knew the degree. . . . Tell Mrs. Motte I love and esteem her. . . ."

Captain Sands could not say enough in Marian's praise. Writing to Hastings after the Patna incident he exhausted himself in superlatives :

"Mrs. Hastings is such a woman as I really believe no country ever before produced, or will again. She is, without a compliment, my dear sir, the Glory of her sex—I am sure she is the admiration of ours, by all that know her, and those in particular who have seen her within these six weeks past. So much resolution and firmness of mind were surely never united in one before. I would attempt to describe her heroism to you, but so far am I from being equal to it, it is a task the ablest pen would find difficult to accomplish."

Mrs. Sullivan would not, one fears, have endorsed Sands' views. Both she and her husband complained bitterly, later, to Hastings of Marian's attitude to her at this time. Marian was evidently bored with the poor lady's society. The best excuse that can be offered is that the nerves of both women were, in all probability, so frayed with anxiety for their respective husbands that they jarred upon one another. Marian had taken no pains to conceal her indifference to the feelings of the lady. She was, in fact, constitutionally incapable of con-

sideration for anyone towards whom she felt no affinity. This attitude was, perhaps, fostered by Marian's easy social success with men. Like most people of vivid charm she was impulsive in her friendships and intolerant in her dislikes. It was certainly unkind of her to depart for Bhagulpore without giving Mrs. Sullivan any warning of her intention. Mrs. Motte tried to make peace, suggesting that Mrs. Sullivan should be allowed to rejoin the party, but Marian ordered her to "stay where she was" at Mr. Law's house in Patna. The fact that Stephen Sullivan was a son of the Chairman of the East India Company did not appear to influence the haughty Marian in the least. She evidently gave Hastings her version of the disagreement, for he wrote : " I am glad that Lady Impey is with you, and Mrs. Sullivan is not."

At Chunar Hastings was engaged in negotiations that were to have far-reaching and historic consequences. Having failed to accomplish his purpose with the Rajah of Benares he now drew fresh hope from an interview with the Nawab Vizier of Oude. The Nawab was an effete young man, idle and weak, but he had a genuine admiration and even affection for Hastings, whom he termed *The Prop of the State*. He was ready to concede to any demands which the Governor-General might make ; but he and his fortunes were in the soft pale hands of his mother and grandmother, the Begums of Oude, who were withholding from him a large portion of his inheritance. Hastings, who suspected that the Begums were conspiring with enemies of

the British, was determined that the Nawab should no longer shelter himself behind the skirts of the Zenana. He owed the Company a debt, and Hastings, through his agent, pressed the matter of payment. . . .

If ever a man had "two soul sides, one to face the world with, one to show a woman when he loves her," it was Warren Hastings. While he was writing to Middleton, his agent at the Lucknow Court : "You must not allow any negotiations or forbearance, but must prosecute both services until the Begums are entirely at the mercy of the Nawab, . . ." he was, at the same time, writing letters that breathed the purest and most tender devotion to his beloved wife. That she was also kept informed of the position is apparent from some passages in the letters :

"The Nawab has behaved honourably, and seems rejoiced at our success. . . . Our plan has proved an excellent one, and equal to one of your best moves at chess."

Marian's comment on the matter is contained in a letter written to Sir Elijah Impey. At this time she had joined Hastings at Benares, and the letter was written while on her way down to Calcutta :

"I daresay you know that Mr. Middleton and His Excellency" (she means the Nawab) "had left Lucknow on the 2nd of the month to go to Fayzabad and quell the diabolical spirits of the old Begum and the Bhow Begum, which was accomplished on the 13th. The Nabob's party were put in possession of the Kella without effusion of blood. The two eunuchs, Baber and Jawar Ally Cawn, delivering themselves into the

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Nabob's custody. . . . I hope that this late step will settle matters to the satisfaction of Mr. Hastings and advantage to the Company."

Artless Marian ! Could she but have looked into the future and seen the effect of that "late step" to which she so complacently alluded ! Seven weary years of anxiety and something akin to despair were mercifully hidden from her, for the "diabolical" Begums were to be amply avenged for any injustice dealt to them.

In England loaded dice were already rattling in the box. In the April of that year secret Committees had been appointed to investigate the causes of war in the Carnatic and the administration of justice in Bengal. From equally secret presses there poured anonymous pamphlets, sinister and venomous. The Governor-General of Bengal was lampooned as a greedy tyrant, a rebel and despot.

In October Philip Francis arrived in England, ready to swell the turbid stream of criticism. Disappointed and resentful, he imparted a new flavour to the attacks on Hastings. What had been a criticism of policy was now savoured with the gall of a vindictive and defeated opponent. His acquaintance with Edmund Burke showed him a weapon to hand, and Burke's honesty of purpose made him a ready if subconscious accomplice of Francis' revenge. While Francis was injecting his malice into one pamphlet after another Burke's brilliant rhetoric assailed the ears of the Committee of Enquiry.

The London wits and elegants raised satiric

brows over the mysterious pamphlets. The Indian " nabobs " and their affairs were again topics of interest in the coffee-houses and other resorts of the fashionable idle.

" Adieu the golden sands of the Ganges (all the waters of which would not wash away our corruptions)," wrote Horace Walpole, ready as ever to condemn those actions to which his circumstance did not incline. " Adieu the diamonds of Bengal ! Rumbold¹ is the last waiter at White's whose babe will be rocked in a cradle of gems ; and Sykes² the last footman who will be created a baronet for being worth some lacs of rupees. . . . Hyder Ali has dispersed all our visions of endless wealth."

For the present Marian was smarting under a private sense of injury. When the fort of Bideghur fell before the Company's Army the Rajah's treasure was seized upon by the officers, who divided it among themselves as prize money. This was not authorised by Hastings, who had hoped to add it to the Company's finances. The officers, by way of placating the Governor's wife, sent Marian, as her share of the plunder, a richly ornamented sword, the hilt set with jewels, together with a set of exquisitely inlaid dressing boxes. These Hastings forbade her to accept. At no time did he approve of his wife receiving rich presents, and now he was

¹ Sir Thomas Rumbold, Governor of Madras, was reputed to have remitted £160,000 home during his three years of office.

² Sir Francis Sykes, an intimate friend of Hastings. Succeeded him as Resident at Murshedabad, and said that " he never saw such confused accounts as Hastings left behind him."

irritated by this haphazard allotment of the treasure that he had earmarked for the Company. Marian, who thought the offering showed "a very proper spirit in the officers," pouted but obeyed, for Hastings had promised that the articles should be copied for her. Hastings, who hated to deny his Marian any object on which her fancy was set, would have engaged to have the Crown jewels copied had she desired them.

Hastings need not have feared for his wife's safety at Bhagulpore ; Cheyte Singh's effort was spent. Apart from some mutinous disturbances in various regiments the disaffection did not trouble Bengal. Marian, with the Impeys and Mrs. Motte, stayed with Mr. Cleveland at Bhagulpore until the cooler weather of October made travel by river more enjoyable. Escorted by Colonel Ahmuty, she then set off for Benares with Mrs. Motte.

The joy of reunion would have made any meeting place a palace. But the Governor was housed in the environs of Benares at Mahadeo Dass' Garden. The very name has music in it, and in the brilliant days of the Indian autumn Marian found the place a very Paradise. There were picnic parties and riding parties, with long leisurely breakfasts after them, and Hastings took his Marian to visit Chunar, where the garrison received her with great ceremony. She had recovered from her slight annoyance with Francis Grand for his lack of reticence at the time of his matrimonial *débâcle*. They now rode together and even plotted gaily against the Governor. Hastings, who was anxious to be in

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Calcutta early in February, was somewhat surprised to find that Marian had some objection to starting on the long journey in the first days of December. The reason was soon apparent. On the morning of the 6th he was informed that a party had been arranged to celebrate his fiftieth birthday. Marian reminded him that he had once declared that he would celebrate no birthdays but his fiftieth and his hundredth—and now the first was here !

CHAPTER VII

WARREN HASTINGS had become increasingly anxious about Marian's health. There was no immediate cause for alarm, but she had been ailing for years in a vague and indefinite way. The letters and diaries of this period abound in references to the important matter of health. Enquiries as to a neighbour's health were more than a polite convention, even in England. But among the English in Calcutta ill-health was more than fashionable, it was inevitable. There was sufficient cause for genuine alarm. Calcutta was insanitary ; fevers of every description were prevalent, and the mode of life did not conduce to health. This was a " three bottle " age, and few men consented to abandon their customary potations. Early deaths were too common to excite more than a passing comment in a diary or a letter.

" Here people die one day, and are buried the next,¹ their furniture sold the third, and they are forgotten the fourth,"

wrote one lady who visited Calcutta about that time. Denied the later refuge of the hill stations, the unhappy officials of the Company sought some slight respite in the smaller stations up river. Here conditions were little more favourable, but the change of scene afforded jaded livers a spurious tonic.

Marian had seen her own social circle thinned in tragic sequence. Mrs. Wheler, the bride whose

hooped gown had excited so much envy and admiration at Mr. Francis' ball, had survived her marriage only seven months and her husband had married again in three.¹

Mrs. Barwell, who had been lovely Elizabeth Sanderson, the toast of Calcutta, stayed only long enough to present her husband with two sons before she too joined the silent company in Park Street cemetery. Death had placed an icy finger on the Council table—Monson and Clavering were both gone, and laughing Judge Lemaistre would give no more gay card parties. Francis, with his usual good judgment, had flirted with death too long to be caught at a venture. A few months after the duel with Hastings he had bowed himself gracefully out of India.

The fear of disease whetted the appetites of young and elderly alike ; the hazard of life gave a feverish impetus to every form of pleasure or amusement. In this land of golden opportunity, where fortunes were so quickly won and lost, the English danced in desperate carnival. Composing his own epitaph, Dean Swift had dipped his pen in satire some years earlier :

“ The Dean is dead !—
 (‘ Pray, what are trumps ? ’). ”

¹ “ I saw Mr. Wheler and Miss Durnford married last night,” wrote Warren Hastings to his wife. “ How it agreed with them I know not, but it has given me a cold and sore throat. . . . Would it not be kind, civil at least, if you were to write a short letter to her, expressing your . . . regret that you were not present ? I did this for you, and she said it was a pity.”

Wheler's first wife was Miss Harriet Chichele Plowden.

The spirit of this gibe was typical of those reckless days, and was quickened in Calcutta, where doctors wrote their prescriptions with more optimism than confidence, and resorted to bleeding as a panacea for every malady.

In her fourteen years in the country Marian had been fortunate in escaping serious illness ; but the humid atmosphere of Calcutta works insidiously upon even so strong a constitution as hers. Marian's health was an ever-present anxiety to Hastings ; he frequently urged his wife to take more exercise, to eat sparingly and to rise early, reminding her of the Persian proverb that the air of Paradise blows between the ears of a horse. But her restless temperament and high spirits were opposed to any regime, especially to one so severe. In this summer, however, she also became alarmed. Her resistance to Hastings' entreaties weakened as her vivacity became more forced. She had once said of a young woman who died that "she had stayed just one year too long," and Hastings, reflecting on this, grew frightened lest his wife might also outstay her welcome in this land of disease and sudden death.

With another year of office before him, Hastings shut his mind to the gloomy prospect of life in Calcutta without Marian. He knew how greatly his spirits and well-being depended upon the stimulus of her lively presence.

"My mind is naturally gloomy and yours spriteliness itself, which has sometime changed the quality of mine," he wrote to her in the loneliness that fell upon him after her departure. Convinced that his

wife would not willingly consent to leave him, Hastings determined to override his own affections. Having come to his inexorable decision that Marian should set sail without delay, he sought to ease his aching heart by devising the extreme of luxury for her voyage. With a kind of dogged determination he started on his preparations with ardour and judgment, but no thought of economy. His Marian must travel in state and be equipped for the journey with a regal magnificence.

For Marian's sole use of the state-room and the round-house of the *Atlas* Hastings paid the staggering sum of five thousand pounds. But this was merely the initial expenditure. Marian must not travel unattended ; so once again the devoted Mrs. Motte was pressed into service. Willing service it was ; Mary Motte was ready to accompany the Governor's wife, and it is impossible not to suspect that her pretty head had been turned by so much favour shown at Government House. Thomas Motte had been made bankrupt a year previously, and she was probably finding that life in India was not so easy and luxurious as she had hoped it might be. The prospect of a comfortable voyage, together with a present of one thousand pounds which Hastings pressed upon her, was not to be lightly refused. For the comparatively small sum of five hundred pounds the chief officer of the *Atlas* renounced his cabin for her. A Captain Phipps was also to attend the ship as far as St. Helena, while a couple of Indian girls and a steward were hired to wait upon them.

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Nor was this all. The state cabin and the round-house must be entirely refitted and refurnished for Marian's use. Calcutta talked with bated breath of the splendid manner in which the state-room was decorated, of the sandalwood and carved ivory of the fittings, the thick silks and embroideries of the curtains and draperies, the silver and the porcelain. And the baggage ! Bales and crates, boxes and cases ; all filled with treasures of the East. An ivory bed, inlaid with silver ; another " gilt with gold," chairs and tables of ivory, silks and muslins wrought with heavy gold thread, furs in quantity, curios and carvings and jewels—and yet more jewels. Well might the Emperor Shah Alam, conferring flowery but empty titles of honour upon the Governor and his wife, describe her as " most exalted Balkis . . . Zobiade of the palaces," for not the Queen of Sheba was more laden with treasure, or travelled more magnificently than did Marian Hastings when she said farewell to the land which she had entered in such humble circumstances. Not all of these sumptuous articles were for her own use, however ; many were presents for friends, and one of the ivory beds was destined for Queen Charlotte's acceptance.

It has fallen to the lot of many men since the days of Warren Hastings to send a loved one out of India. Many hearts have ached with the intolerable pain of parting, and many tear-misted eyes have peered across the waste of yellow waters at the mouth of the Hooghly. India is the country of farewells, but in the days when voyages seemed

interminable the anguish of parting was mingled with apprehension. News of the travellers was long in arriving, wrecks were frequent and the atmosphere on the old sailing ships was by no means healthful. Many of the ships' surgeons were unqualified men, and it is both tragic and amusing to recall that Hicky, the printer, was one of those who applied for this position !

Warren Hastings suffered as only a sensitive man can. After a period of the greatest strain and anxiety he found himself without " the great and only blessing " of his life. The preparations for Marian's departure had blinded him to his great loss. Almost before her ship was out of sight he was asking himself why he had done this thing. He declared himself " stupified with astonishment " at the industry with which he had worked to make himself miserable and his Marian unhappy. It seemed to him the " grossest of follies " that he should have taken so much trouble to send her from him when, possibly, he had exaggerated the need for such a step.

Having taken his wife down river as far as possible in their barge, he returned alone to Calcutta.

" I followed your ship with my eyes until I could no longer see it, and I passed a most miserable day, with a heart swollen with affliction and a head raging with pain. . . . The instant sight of our cabin, every object in it and beyond it brought my dear Marian to my imagination with the deadly reflection that she was . . . receding to a distance that seems, in my estimation, infinite. . . . Yesterday I held in my arms all that my heart holds dear, and now she is separated



MRS. HASTINGS

(by Zoffany)

Now in the Victoria Memorial Hall, Calcutta. (The portrait that Mrs. Hastings disliked.)

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from me as if she had no longer existence. . . . I love you by far more than life for I could not live but in the hope of being once more united to you. . . .”

So he wrote to her, after nearly eight years of married life, his emotions and feelings as fresh and vivid as though they were both at life's April age. He was fifty-two and she thirty-seven, but to the end of his life her beauty, her charm and vivacity remained his pride and delight. Hard things have been said about Marian Hastings, but undoubtedly she possessed great qualities of heart and mind to have enslaved a man like Hastings, who never blinded himself to the weaknesses of others, and could be ruthlessly censorious.

Zoffany, the famous painter who was said to have left England under a cloud of Royal displeasure, had visited Calcutta in the previous year. Hastings had commissioned a portrait of his wife. The result did not particularly please Marian, who felt with justice that it expressed dignity rather than charm. She is shown seated, with flowing robes and a somewhat tragic pose, in the Siddons tradition. In his grief Hastings had this portrait hung at the foot of his “ivory cot” so that his first sight on waking should be his wife's face. In this manner he added wilfully to his sense of desolation ; yet the sight seems to have afforded him some strange comfort and influenced his dreams.

“I have found out a method to see and converse with you whenever I sleep,” he wrote, “and I have had your company every night for these four nights past, but you do not always wear the looks of

kindness which I am sure you will wear if ever again I see you in the substance. . . .”

Hastings, a prolific and fluent writer, found some consolation in the expression of his loneliness and his longing for the bright presence of his wife. In their delicacy and utter tenderness these letters must rank among the great love-letters of the world. The somewhat stilted and elaborate language seems to heighten their pathos. Possibly his love of Persian literature flavoured his literary style.

— The Governor was seldom alone, save in his thoughts. Calcutta, he felt, had no mercy on him. He might shut his gates, but still they let people through “like a sieve.”

“I miss you in every instant and incident in my life, and everything seems to wear a dead stillness around me ; I come home to a solitude ; I see a crowd in my house and about my table, but not the look of welcome which used to make my home a delight to me ; no Marian to infuse into my heart the fulness of content and make me pleased with everybody and everything about me. . . . Even in my dreams I have lost you. . . .”

In thus hugging his sorrow, and making of it his daily companion, Hastings was fully aware of his own weakness.

“All the wise men that have ever written about love have agreed to call it a folly, and so pronounce him only truly wise and truly happy who can confine his search of happiness to himself alone. . . . In this sense I am far gone in folly indeed, so far that I would rather be miserable with my present feelings than cured with apathy.”

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One of the Governor's troubles was that few of the people about him ever spoke to him of his wife. This silence affords ground for conjecture. All Calcutta knew of his fondness for and his pride in Marian. The uxorious husband may be a subject for amused comment, but he is usually indulged in his amiable weakness. Hastings had many friends ; it is significant that none of these talked to him of Marian. Most of them were married, and women were critical of Marian and envious of her state and her jewels. Although memories are short in the East, with its constantly shifting population, there were many eager to carry the story of her humble beginning. The women resented the deference now exacted by one who had begun her Indian career as the wife of a poor portrait painter ; and there are few men so independent of spirit as to avoid being swayed by their wives.

"I am vexed that no one will talk of you to me. It was the case even when you were with me," wrote Hastings. "No one ever mentioned your name to me except in the common form of civility. I must except Mrs. Samson ; she would praise you to me for an hour together. . . . I never interrupted her but to encourage her to lengthen the subject."

Throughout that year of loneliness, the Governor battled on. Constitutionally fragile, but mentally alert and resolute, he felt the burden of Government press hard upon him. His health was failing, headaches and general *malaise* tormented him, and his thoughts turned unceasingly to retirement from India. It was not entirely a matter of health, nor

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even of loneliness. India turns with sudden savagery against even those who have loved her and understood her. The tiger draws her sustenance from the young ; for the old and tired she has no further use.

Warren Hastings loved India with an almost paternal affection, and, to this day, his name is remembered by the Indian people while those of the men who succeeded him are as whispers heard in a dream. But he, too, had come to see the tiger's mask as no longer beautiful, and its claws unsheathed. At a hint from Major Scott that he might be asked to serve for yet another year Hastings wrote :

“ In that event I shall bid everlasting farewell to all my hopes, for the period which nature fixed for the duration of my services is already past, and the attempt to prolong it to another season must end me, or which would be worse, send me home laden with infirmities. . . .”

It was in many ways a troublous year for Hastings. Disagreements still occurred on the Council, and the Governor was a man who could not tolerate opposition of any kind. Of John Macpherson, that pleasant mannered adventurer, he wrote, rather peevishly : “ Clavering and Monson were my avowed enemies . . . these are my dear friends . . .” Both Wheler and Macpherson opposed him at times. Hastings well knew that other and more influential enemies were gathering their forces against him in England, although the exact measure of their malignity was

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beyond his power of imagination. Pitt's Bill to deprive the East India Company of political power caused him much uneasiness ; he was aware, too, of Francis' activities, and could guess the nature of the arguments, fair or foul, which his old enemy would bring forward. But it was with hurt surprise he suspected that a trusted friend had turned against him. To Marian he wrote : " I have been privately told that the friends of Richard Johnson are amongst my worst enemies in England. He is a sad fellow if this be true. Be on your guard both with him and with Middleton."

The condition of his private finances was also causing Hastings anxiety. He had greatly depleted his resources in sending Marian out of India, and in providing for her life in England. Now he asked her :

" How, my Marian, will you receive a healthless and penniless husband ? Will your heart reproach him with precipitance and improvidence, or will it lay both to the account of an affection which could disregard wealth and every blessing upon earth if they could only be obtained by separation from the object of it ? "

Hastings even feared that another year in India would " disqualify me to leave it, by means of the want of means to pay my passage."

This question of his poverty occurs constantly in his letters :

" My Marian, do not entertain hopes of improvement in our fortunes. If your love for me is, as I am sure it is, superior to every other wish, you must be content to receive your husband again without other expectations—poor in cash, but rich in credit (at least he hopes he is) and in affection unexampled."

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Hastings, as his wife said, never knew what he had nor what was owed to him. For years past he had drawn a princely salary, but, apart from buying jewels for Marian, and keeping open house to his friends, it is difficult to imagine where the money went. And this was the man who was accused of having brought a colossal fortune out of India !

News of his beloved wife came to Hastings at last ; and it was of a nature to fill his heart with joy mixed with apprehension. Warren Hastings was a man of deep and self-sacrificing affections, one who longed for the blessings of parenthood. Yet these had been denied to him. The death of his little son had destroyed many hopes and high ambitions. He would have evaded none of the responsibilities of a father. This is proved not only by the manner in which he cherished his two step-sons, but by his interest in the education and aims of his friend's children. He had an unflagging interest in the careers of his numerous god-children, the number of which increased with the years. Sands, Anderson, Impey, D'Oyley, all named sons after Warren Hastings. In this sense he was the vicarious father of many. He now received intimation of a renewed hope that he might yet have a son to bear his name and inherit his estate. Marian conveyed these hopes in a letter from St. Helena. She left that island on May 15th " in perfect health and in the full assurance of being in a state which might, in its event, make me truly the happiest of all mankind."

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"I am the happiest man living," he wrote again. ". . . Your permission, my Marian, was unnecessary ; all mankind knew it as soon as I did . . . and I think all the world is mad with joy for it."

But an ironical fate decreed that these hopes should fade as swiftly as they dawned. Marian's first letter from England, written the day after her arrival on August 2nd, conveyed the intelligence that the delicate situation was at an end ; he could hope no longer.

Hastings received the letter at night, and sat up long, reading it again and again.

"Whether I was happy or unhappy in reading it," he wrote, "I cannot tell you. I fear my disappointment on one subject equalled my joy for your safety—the close of your perils and the promise that you will soon be as well as you ever had been at any period of your life. I have since thought only on the good, and I thank God for it."

CHAPTER VIII

THE *Atlas* rolled pompously on her way. Warren Hastings had accompanied his wife as far on her journey as was possible, and had arranged for the pilot sloop to escort the *Atlas* further than was usual. He had reason for anxiety when the ship carried a burden so precious to him ; for the Hooghly, with its ever shifting sandbanks, extending over a hundred miles from Calcutta, is reckoned one of the most dangerous rivers in the world. Many ships have been cast away on the bank that landmen know as the *James and Mary* sands, and Indians call, in picturesque fashion, *Jahaz Mari* or *Killer of Ships*.

Marian and Mrs. Motte bustled happily about the state-room, arranging it with the pleasure of housewives. Their gaiety was soon to be cut short. Mr. Cleveland, who had been their host at Bhagul-pore, was a fellow passenger. Still young, only twenty-nine, he was already a victim of the climate, and this voyage was a sick man's last desperate throw for health. He died almost before the ship was past the Sandheads. Marian at once reversed the order for the pilot sloop and sent it back to Calcutta with Cleveland's body for burial ashore. This action, typical of Marian's capacity for arriving at rapid and practical decisions, appealed to Hastings as being "consistent with her generous and unequalled sensibility." His sorrow at the young man's death was personal. Cleveland was a general favourite, and Hastings had seen too many of his younger colleagues cut off in their youth and promise.

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In Marian's case the pain of parting with her husband was mitigated by the prospect of again seeing her sons. Her nature was ever elastic, and she saw now an opportunity to redeem her maternal obligations. In the excitements of the past few years she had found it difficult at times to believe that she had ever known another existence. In spite of her humble upbringing Marian was instinctively a great lady. She had both the faults and the virtues of one who accepts power as a natural attribute. As the novelty of her exalted position wore off she had accepted the official round of duties and pleasures without losing any of her almost girlish love of flattery and fun. But beneath the fluttering muslins and the glittering jewels Marian had preserved, untarnished by the world, her strong maternal instinct. Denied children by her second marriage, she had given generously to her husband and lover. As long as she was assured that her boys were well cared for she had had little time in which to yearn for them. That year, however, she had received a letter from Major Scott, Hastings' friend, which recalled her thoughts to the past. The Major had visited the Imhoff boys in England, where both had been placed at Hastings' old school, Westminster.

"The eldest grows a handsome graceful young fellow," wrote the Major, "and the youngest, little Julius, is a perfect resemblance of his dear mother."

Few women, least of all the impulsive Marian, could have resisted such an appeal. Hastings' solicitude for her health clinched the matter. She

sailed on her journey dreaming of the welcome awaiting her, and unknowing of the prospect that she might again become a mother.

The voyage of the *Atlas* was long and tedious. Although she left Calcutta in January 1784 Marian did not arrive in England until August 2nd. The ship weathered three violent storms, one of them so severe that Marian was confined to her cabin for seven days. The furnishings were thrown about and smashed, and she herself had an escape from death when the large lamp globe fixed in the ceiling came unshipped and fell, narrowly missing her. Through it all Marian found time to write voluminous letters to her husband. "I stop at your twenty-first page . . ." he wrote once. But it was a bad voyage in many respects. Marian was so ill that Hastings wrote: "I am beyond measure glad that you have found such a resource in opium—I would have prescribed it."

It speaks volumes for the strength of Marian's constitution and the resilience of her nature that, after all these trials and tribulations, she should have arrived in England in radiant health. Storms and danger, weariness of spirit such as must assail all those who look out for weeks and months on the same monotony of sea and sky, and the ending of her hope to bear a child to a loved husband; all these had been Marian's portion. Yet she landed eager as a child for a party.

But for her impatience—she might have enjoyed a most impressive landing. The Commissioner of the dockyard had arranged for the King's yacht to

meet the *Atlas* and bring Marian and her suite to shore. His wife, who had been in India, and knew what was due to a Governor's wife, insisted upon lending her coach to bring the party from Portsmouth to London. Unfortunately these plans miscarried. Marian and Mrs. Motte, heedless of the honour in store for them, and anxious to step on to dry land, had disembarked at Dunnose Point.

Hastings' old friends at once rallied round Marian. Major Scott, that florid pink and white man, was first on the scene. After consultation with Mr. Woodman, Hastings' brother-in-law, he had obeyed Hastings' request to find a house for Marian and prepare it for her arrival. "A good furnished house in a healthy part of London . . . Portman Square for preference," said Hastings, who recommended also that it should be one "in a style proper to her station."

The Major found just such a house in South Street with a view over the Park and the Surrey hills. The busy man also provided a new coach "with your crest and cypher upon it." Here then was the house complete with servants and ready for Marian's occupation. Nor was this all, for the Major fell foul of the Customs authorities, who were not prepared to make concession to Marian's position, and looked askance at the silks and ivories and other treasures from the East. The silks were prohibited, the muslins embroidered with gold and silver were detained; a velvet riding habit embroidered with pearls came under review, but was allowed to pass. Marian was indignant,

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and Major Scott exercised all his tact and diplomacy with her. Writing to Hastings he relieved his feelings by saying that "there are not such a set of vermin in England as our Customs House officers." It was not until months later that he was able to effect a clearance of the precious articles, and then on payment of a large sum in duty.

It was the Major who arranged for the landing of the two Arab horses that Hastings presented to the King, and the splendid bed which was Marian's gift to the Queen.

"A state bed of rich and very curious workmanship was carried to the Queen's Palace as a present from Lady Hastings, brought from India, which exceeds anything for grandeur seen in this country."

This is the somewhat confused description of the bed, given in the *Lady's Magazine* for September of that year. It seemed an innocent present, but Hastings' enemies seized upon the circumstance with relish. "The Fox-ites," as Scott contemptuously called them, spread the rumour that the bed was ornamented with pearls and was worth no less than fifty thousand pounds. "But we are too high now in the public opinion to be hurt by such execrable nonsense," wrote the confident Major whose well-intentioned blunders were, later, to prejudice Hastings' case.

Much as she felt the loss of her husband's society Marian had no intention of secluding herself. She found herself comfortably housed, decked with jewels and fine clothes, with friends ready to escort her to every form of amusement. Her sons were a

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delight to her, although she experienced the surprise of most mothers who realise that their children have gone from them, and that grown men have come in their place. Charles was in his first year at Oxford, Julius in his last year at Westminster, and Marian found herself with two new admirers. For both boys were obviously proud of their charming and youthful looking mother.

Other triumphs were to be Marian's. Madame Schwellenberg was there to greet her, and eager to recall her to the Royal memory. Lady Weymouth presented Marian at Court a fortnight after her arrival ; she was bidden to yet another Drawing-Room a fortnight later. Major Scott attended Marian on this occasion, and was proud to report that she had been received with every mark of attention. The Queen had conversed with Marian for some time, later remarking to the proud Major that she " was glad to see that Mrs. Hastings is so much recovered. She looks infinitely better than when I saw her a fortnight ago." The Royal lady then expressed a hope that " this country would soon restore Mrs. Hastings to perfect health."

A discriminating lady, Queen Charlotte. Not a " sweet Queen," perhaps, but one with dignity and a level courtesy. She must have laughed in her sleeve at the agitation of her equerries who, recalling the old story of the German divorce, " feared for her sake " lest she be contaminated by the society of the lively lady with the auburn ringlets. It was a dull Court and the ladies-in-waiting and the equerries gossiped freely on the subject of Mrs.

Hastings, who seemed determined to take the town by storm with her jewels and her vivacity. Covertly they disapproved the marked favour shown at Court. Marian's worst fault was her love of the limelight, and Fanny Burney had some acrimonious remarks to make on this score, wondering how such a well-bred woman must always be the centre of attraction in every scene. In Fanny's opinion she both talked and laughed too loudly. But the lady-in-waiting was kind enough to explain to the distressed equerries that divorce in Germany did not carry the stigma that it did in England, although she, at the same time, was surprised that Madam Schwellenberg did not stand up for her favourite in a more robust fashion.

Marian had created a sensation by appearing at Court with her beautiful hair, which was one of her chief points of vanity, unfripped and unadorned, an astonishing innovation in an age of powder and pomatum. In London, as in Calcutta, Mrs. Hastings aimed at distinction in both dress and manner, and lived up to Miss Goldborne's description of herself as "the great ornament of places of polite resort," while Fanny Burney acknowledged that "everybody else looked under-dressed" beside the ex-Governor's wife. Marian, conscious of having been the first lady in Calcutta, could not have endured to be relegated to an insignificant position in London. Fortunately for her the Court was pleased to welcome a distinguished country-woman. The magic wand of language wafted her with a touch into the inner circles of society; the

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German accent which had evoked good-humoured criticism in India now charmed the home-sick ear of a Queen. If there were those who resented Marian's triumph, and criticised her for thrusting too eagerly into St. James's she scarcely heeded such disparagement, if it ever reached her. She was well and happy, and a social queen ; what more could any woman crave ? save the society of her husband—and he was hastening towards her.

To Hastings Major Scott wrote jubilantly :

" Mrs. Hastings is well, perfectly so, and as happy as she can be in your absence. She was at Court on the Queen's birthday, and attracted universal admiration and, of course, some envy. . . . She was dressed as Mrs. Hastings ought to be. . . ."

The great Sir Elijah also felt the potency of Marian's spell. He seemed to take a special and almost personal pride in her social success, and almost preened himself in his letters to Hastings :

" . . . She is in perfect health and I never saw her in such high spirits . . . the manner in which she is caressed by the first people in the nation . . . received and respected as she is, and to have the consciousness that in it, through her, you are receiving the honours due to your character and public services . . . this is a great thing."

Was Sir Elijah, in truth, oblivious of the underground activities of Hastings' enemies, of the mine that was being so subtly laid ? The damaging pamphlets were still being broadcast, and Philip Francis was proclaiming that " Nund Kumar is

returned, like Caesar's ghost, and, with Até by his side, is now raging for revenge."

Francis watched Marian's triumphs with a jaundiced eye. His own reception in England had been cold ; it was said that when he attended Court only two men spoke to him, the King and Lord North. He had brought only a moderate fortune out of India (which fact must be allowed to him for righteousness) and his official career had ended without the achievement of his two most cherished ambitions—the Governorship of India and the humiliation of Warren Hastings. Although a severely disappointed man he had not relinquished hope of either, but continued to work, with the tireless industry peculiar to him, in both the causes near to his heart. At the same time he suffered a pang lest Hastings should, on his return, repeat his wife's success.

Meanwhile a distorted report of the Benares insurrection had reached England, and Parliament passed a resolution that Hastings should be recalled. Once again, however, the shareholders of the East India Company came to the rescue of the Governor—some might say to the rescue of India. Burke raged at the reversal of their hopes and plans ; but Francis bit his pen and waited patiently for the moment to stab. He had other matters to engage his attention for the present, for he was conducting an acrimonious correspondence with the Directors of the Company regarding his salary while on the tedious homeward voyage.

Marian found it easy to ignore her husband's

enemies. When she talked the matter over with Scott he was optimistic and consolatory. Her greatest hope was that Hastings would not be asked to serve another year in India ; she had little apprehension as to what might happen when he arrived in England.

"You will have arrived most seasonably to prevent any measures from passing which may obstruct my departure," Hastings had written to her. And any uneasiness was quickly dissolved in smiles as she reviewed the flattering promise of the future. This was not the Marian who had lived in Soho and carried her babe to be baptised in the old Church of St. Giles in the Fields. She had come far since then, on a path strewn with flowers. She was lapped round in luxury, with devoted friends at hand to do her lightest bidding. Her health was perfect and her looks as fine as they had ever been. Small wonder that Marian found forgetfulness easy.

Wherever she went her ease and elegance of manner were remarked upon. Her spirits were so high that some of her friends thought that such extreme energy must affect her health. When she stayed with Hastings' old friends, the Caillauds, her hostess set herself to subdue those spirits in what General Caillaud described as "the most tyrannical manner." He added that "the struggle was a perfect comedy," although there is no record as to whether Mrs. Caillaud succeeded in her endeavour. Probably not, for that summer Marian made another conquest. The black-browed Chancellor Thurlow joined the ranks of her admirers, and paid

her such marked attention that some of Hastings' friends grew uneasy.

Thurlow, the man whose expression was compared to the lion and the eagle, was, said Creevy, rough with men, but the politest man in the world with ladies. He was more than polite to Marian, and the compliment of being so assiduously courted by the great Chancellor went a little to her head. It was remarked that she was always at her best and her most vivacious when in his company, while her accent amused him, and added a charm to her sparkling conversation. Having regard to Thurlow's arrogance and bad reputation Mrs. Motte probably found it expedient to reassure Hastings, although she must have been comfortably aware that no gossip could shake the Governor's trust in his wife.

"... Her health is better than when I had the pleasure of addressing you last month," wrote Mary Motte in September, "and it is not unlucky perhaps that her spirits which are moderate to what they were when she was with you in India will not endanger it by exertions they might lead her into were they better. . . . I must tell you, however, that when she is most inclined to be livelier than usual it is when she is in company with the Chancellor, and indeed some of your friends appear a little alarmed or jealous for you upon that subject: for my part, not being afraid of you, I confess I am never better pleased or think she appears to greater advantage than on such occasions."

Kind little Mary Motte! A breathless letter-writer, but what a watchful eye she kept upon her admired patron, and how completely she sank her own interests in attendance upon her friend. One

wonders whether no pang of self-reproach assailed her when she thought on the deserted Thomas Motte, now languishing in a debtor's prison in Calcutta and bewailing the defection of a wife who, he said, "never behaved with impropriety save to me."

Major Scott, always at hand to do Marian's bidding, to accompany her to Court and escort her to see Mrs. Siddons play *Lady Macbeth*, was another whose name did not escape the gossips. Some crude verses descriptive of Marian's passion for jewels appeared a little later, with an innuendo against the Major's evident admiration for the Governor's wife. Yet Scott added his assurances to those of Mrs. Motte, writing to Hastings that Marian, although surrounded by adulation, "counted the moments" of her separation from her husband, and gave an affecting instance of how her tears fell as she drank his health.

"The respect and attention with which Mrs. Hastings is received is not confined to one rank in life," said he, "but from all. . . . Nor can Malice itself find anything to answer in her."

It was well that Marian should snatch at her golden opportunities. They were never to come again. Malice did, indeed, find much to "answer" in the later years. Fêted, complimented by Royalty, flattered by politicians, courted by men and envied by women, Marian Hastings was in that winter to reach the apex of her ambitions, and to feel herself scarcely less a queen in London than she had been in Calcutta.

Marian's head was never proof against flattery, and in November of that year Hastings penned a warning against a too ready belief in compliments. It was seldom that he chided his wife ; but several of his letters make it abundantly clear that he was alive to her faults or, as he called them, foibles. He sent Marian the *firman* of the titles conferred on her by Shah Alam, and reminded her that it was . . . " a beautiful sheet of paper, and that is all it's worth, for though your virtues merit honours greater than kings can bestow, yet these will not raise your stature in life an inch—no, not the breadth of a hair—above that of Mrs. Hastings in your own country (I mean England, for that is yours).¹ Nor were they given to your worth even in this, for had you been destitute of every quality and accomplishment which you possess you might have been the Queen of Sheba, the Goddess of Fortune, or whatever excellence you had chosen for your own appellation. So don't be proud of your titles ; let the Queen of Sheba, if she knows it, boast that her name is united to yours. . . . Remember these reflections when you look at it . . . and be sure not to forget them when you show it. I know you will, for my Marian has her foibles and God forgive me but I have known my own vanity accompanying her and have gazed on her with love and delight when she gave her pride, her graceful pride, its full career. This is meant as a lesson against pride—don't mistake it for encouragement. . . ."

¹ Marian Hastings was not naturalised until May, 1796.

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Marian smiled at the warning with little intention of heeding it. She was too clever not to recognise her own faults, but too self-confident to correct them. Her conquests were being extended further. Lord Mansfield, whom she met when she stayed with the Scotts at Tonbridge, found her delightful company. He escorted her daily to the Assembly Rooms and drove her in his "chariot" to spend a day at Penshurst. At the rooms it was evident that her gowns and her jewels impressed the beholders; but some of the criticism they evoked was not entirely kind. English society had been already exasperated by the ostentation of the wealthy "nabobs" returned from the East laden with spoil. Their reputed sacks of diamonds, their silks and muslins, their perfumes, and the manner in which they flaunted their riches aroused a mingling of contempt and envy in the less fortunate. The wives of some of the London merchants strove to emulate this opulence, often with disastrous results.

"No man ever went to the East Indies with good intentions," sneered Horace Walpole, who himself had had no scruple about acquiring wealth from South Sea Stock before the bubble burst.

* * *

While London whirled gaily about Marian, Warren Hastings was battling through his last year of Governorship. During several months of that year he was in Lucknow on what he described as "a bold adventure." "I went," he says, "without a fixed idea of the instruments which I am to employ

or the material on which I am to act . . . and my superiors at home labouring to thwart and, if they can, remove me . . . and all this as well known to the Indian world as to our own."

This was as near a grumble as the imperturbable Governor permitted himself, and it is characteristic of him that he added : " Yet I go with confidence. . . ."

Bankrupt in health and momentarily deprived of happiness, Hastings has not lost confidence in himself. Ever ready to rely upon his own personality, he was determined to meet guile with guile. Those who have most strongly condemned Hastings have inclined to stress events and ignore implications. No student of Hastings' antecedents can dispute the fact that his practical experience of Indian affairs was actually gained on Indian soil. In his steady progress from a humble writer to the Company to the exalted position of Governor-General he had automatically absorbed not only an understanding of the Indian mind but an appreciation of the extent to which European standards could be successfully applied. He was no politician. He had a flair for administration but none for party politics. He regarded himself, and expected to be regarded, as a responsible executive of the East India Company. The quality that has since then been stigmatised as stubborn Imperialism was, in fact, an exaggerated sense of business zeal. Warren Hastings could see little difference between a defaulting Rajah and an ordinary debtor to the Company.

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Hastings' mission to Lucknow was, of course, concerned with Asaph-ud-Dawla, Nawab Vizier of Oude, to induce the Nawab to reinstate the two Begums from whom he had wrung his inheritance. With his mind occupied with this problem, which would call for guile as well as tact, Hastings nevertheless found time, on his long journey to the Oude capital, to compose verses to his wife. These he sent her, with the modest hope that they would find place in "the book" written in her "fair scrawl." At the same time he suggested that should they meet with her approval merely as "a production of poetical merit" she should burn them. Whether they did meet with her approval or not is a matter for surmise. They are not included in her "Commonplace Book."

Aware as he was of the identity of his enemies in England, Warren Hastings still felt his defences secure.

"I have said nothing to Scott about Mr. Pitt's bill," he wrote to Marian, "because I should hurt his feelings, and I know he was not aware of its malignity; yet I must say to you, but to you only, that his support of it astonishes me, for an act more injurious to his fellow-servants, to my character and authority, to the Company, to the proprietors especially who alone have a right to my services on the principle of gratitude, and to the national honour, could not have been devised, though fifty Burkes, Foxes and Francises had clubbed to invent one. . . ."

In the same letter Hastings held out hope of reunion. His passage in the *Barrington*, due to sail early in February, had been arranged. The year

had been a long and weary one, but at last he had hope of seeing his beloved Marian again.

The marriage of the Hastings is one of the world's greatest romances. It is no exaggeration to say that the honeymoon spirit pervaded all their life together. Hastings loved with all the passion of a man whose affection is not lightly won, and Marian had captured his head as well as his heart. While her graces charmed him he respected her for her judgment and taste, and the courage which life in India demanded from European women. He had waited five chivalrous years for her. There can be no doubt, however, of the physical basis of Hastings' love. His love-letters, while tender and full of esteem for her qualities, have an undercurrent of passion which it is not easy to associate with the dry scholarly-looking Governor. Writing from Alipore in that December, he gives full expression to his longing for her :

“ But what a wretch I am to talk of myself when my Marian is before me ! Yes, my lovely Marian, you are before me ; your delightful looks, your enchanting voice, even your touch (O God ! once more make them substantially mine !) successively take possession of my senses as I read the animated picture of its mind, its sentiments and its sufferings. . . .”

Such sincere adoration would have gone to the head of a meeker woman than Marian. It is no wonder that she was proud in her security and, at times, arrogant. In that autumn and winter in London Marian seems to have attracted most of those with whom she came in contact. Not only



MINIATURE OF MRS. HASTINGS
(attributed to Cosway)

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did she meet with great favour at Court ; men and women alike had flattering remarks to make on Mrs. Hastings' qualities. The " ease and elegance of her bearing " ; " the amiableness of her conversation " ; " lively, obliging and entertaining " ; " this rare and lovely woman." These are but a few of the epithets employed to describe Marian.

The question that inevitably arises is—what was she really like ? Was she actually so beautiful that all the world acknowledged her charm ? Her portraits show her face as pleasing rather than beautiful. Her features were good, but rather large ; her figure was graceful, and she had the matt-white skin that goes with auburn hair. Her eyes, with their heavy lids, and the ample curves of her mouth suggest a nature voluptuous and luxury-loving, although historians claim that she was cold rather than passionate. But charm is an elusive quality, impossible to analyse, and it is evident that Marian had that indefinable quality in abundance. Good looks fade, but charm continues to pay interest long after mere prettiness is bankrupt. Marian would appear to have been what gipsies call " a heart lady " ; one whose charms assail the senses while leaving the reason untouched. And, like many women of this type, she possessed that mysterious alchemy which preserves a youthful appearance throughout life. When Marian was past sixty Hastings said that she continued " in her beauty to exceed every woman who comes within my observation." Such a tribute from a husband might be dismissed as mere uxoriousness. But a

knew well the value of discretion, but she was aware of her debt to Johnson, who had been largely instrumental in arranging her divorce in the days long past. She was wary, but unafraid.

Sir George Vansittart, the ex-Governor, was another old friend of Hastings whom Marian felt compelled to visit at gloomy Bisham Abbey. Fond of luxury and creature comfort she was disappointed to find that the Abbey was by no means as luxurious as the home of a wealthy " nabob " was expected to be. The shortness of her visit rather dismayed Vansittart, who wrote : " She stayed hardly long enough to reconcile herself to our old mansion," at the same time acknowledging that he and his family had " grown accustomed " to its drawbacks. He was handsome also with regard to Marian's favourite game of chess, and rather ruefully allowed that " she is now rather better than I am, for in Bengal I used to beat her."

* * *

Warren Hastings' Indian administration closed on a quiet note. Opposition on the Council had died down ; the long drawn out Mahratta war was ended, the Carnatic evacuated and Hyder Ali was dead. He could now, he felt, look forward to honourable retirement and to the existence which he longed for, that of a country gentleman. " Let me," he had written to Marian, " have but existence and freedom from pain, with the full exercise of my mental faculties, I desire no more till I see the last of Saugor Island."

The prospect seemed clear before him ; the *Barrington* rode at anchor down the river, and farewells were being spoken. The reigning Indian Princes had sent flattering messages of regret at his departure, while in Calcutta all residents, European and Indian alike, assembled to do him honour.

"Every creature is plunged into disconsolation," wrote Miss Sophia Goldborne in the exaggerated hyperbole of the time . . . "not a *bugero* will be unoccupied—it is the last proof of their heartfelt respect they can show him ; and you can judge of the preparation when I tell you it is an absolute voyage they have resolved upon to do him honour. . . . The Company, it is affirmed by those who appear to be well informed, will by this event be deprived of a faithful and able servant ; the poor of a compassionate and generous friend ; the genteel circles of their best ornament and Hartley House of a revered guest."

Rumours of the dissension in England had evidently penetrated to even the more frothy circles of Calcutta society ; for this observant young woman, a new-comer to the settlement, entered into emphatic defence of the Governor.

" . . . I will only add," she says grandiloquently, "as the friends of this gentleman observe that, as the sun is often obscured without lessening its brightness, so the clouds which have so unaccountably gathered around his fame *may* (*will* they say) be one day universally and ultimately dispelled."¹

¹ Miss Sophia Goldborne, author of *Hartley House*, is accepted as an authority on many matters of the time. But she is occasionally startlingly incorrect in her dates. She makes Hastings and his wife leave Calcutta on the same day, although in different ships. Her inaccuracies are possibly accounted for by the fact that the book was written *after* her return to England.

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The Governor-General left Calcutta to a salute of nineteen guns, his friends, in a fleet of *budgerows*, accompanying the state barge as far as Diamond Harbour, forty miles down river. All the *budgerows* were gaily decorated, many had musicians on board, flags flew from every building. And so with every honour, every token of respect and admiration, Warren Hastings said farewell to the land he had loved and cherished—and come to fear.

If a passing shadow touched Hastings' mind it soon dissolved before the vision of a peaceful and happy future. As each day brought him nearer to England, imagination painted the country with the radiant beauty of a mirage. The wind that filled the sails of the *Barrington* seemed to bring him the scent of up-turned earth in English fields, and the golden promise of the country-side in Spring. Writing to Marian from Benares he had once expressed his intense nostalgia :

“I want a multitude of aids to cure me thoroughly. All of which may be included in two comprehensive and comfortable terms, a hard frost and my own fireside . . .”

His longing seemed to lend wings to the ship, for the passage of the *Barrington* was so rapid that, within four months of sailing, he was acknowledging the tributes accorded to him at Plymouth. He landed in good spirits, eager for England and the sight of his beloved Marian. Many of his fellow passengers regretted the loss of so genial a companion. For, full of a sense of release, and conscious of duty performed, Hastings had laid aside

his rather austere manner, and had become almost buoyant in his outlook. John Shore (afterwards Lord Teignmouth) who travelled with him, had at first been sorry to find himself a shipmate of Hastings. Not only was he a strong opponent of Hastings' policy, but he had evidently lent an ear to gossip of the time, and considered that the errors made by Hastings in both his public and his private life were regrettable. With Lord Cornwallis, he felt that the "social and political morality of the English in India demanded a sweeping reform . . ." Governmental expenses had, without doubt, risen enormously during Hastings' administration, salaries were inflated, extravagance and nepotism the order of the day. Suicides and duelling had become alarmingly frequent in the past few years ; but the injustice of blaming the Governor for the recklessness and dissipation of Calcutta society is obvious.

Shore had been prepared to dislike the man as much as he deplored his policy. Brought into close association with Hastings he was soon ready to retract his hastily formed opinion. Before half the voyage was over, the ex-Governor's personality and engaging simplicity, backed by the evident devotion and admiration of David Anderson, who accompanied him, had won John Shore's regard. The friendship then formed was to last both men through life. But there were those in England who were not to be so readily placated.

CHAPTER IX

ONCE ashore Warren Hastings was filled with impatient energy. He passed his first night at Exeter, and was early on the road next morning, pressing on by eager stages to London. He arrived there on June 15th, 1785, a blazing hot day, only to be told that Marian was at Cheltenham. There was nothing to be done but stifle his disappointment and send an express announcing his early arrival. In the few uncomfortable days he passed in London there was much to distract him. Apart from visits to relations and friends there were diplomatic calls which could not be delayed. The day after his arrival he saw Pitt. There was much to discuss—and some matters that did not, as yet, bear discussion. Burke and Francis had been industrious, and Hastings did not understand Pitt's somewhat reserved courtesy.

Within a few days Hastings posted off to meet Marian, who had been warned of his intention, and travelled to meet him. The two "chariots" drew up side by side on Maidenhead Bridge, and here they met, to exchange the countless tendernesses of lovers reunited. The morrow found them back at St. James's Place and the following week was one of almost ceaseless social activity. The returned Proconsul and his wife were received at Court and met with the greatest kindness from both the King and the Queen. Hastings' diary records: "Thursday, 23rd: At 2 went with Mrs. Hastings to Court. Presented to the Queen, Princess Royal, Princess Augusta and the King. Afterwards visited Mrs.

Schwellenberg. Dined with the Archbishop of York . . .”

Invitations poured in on the Hastings ; everywhere Warren Hastings was welcomed with enthusiasm ; the days and nights were a round of receptions and dinners. He was summoned to the East India House to receive the thanks of the Directors of the Company. Thurlow and Mansfield paid tribute to the distinguished husband of the woman who had won the allegiance of both. Sir Elijah Impey was there, to proffer a soft fat hand and nudge Hastings over old campaigns. The Archbishop of York received Hastings several times, and seemed deeply interested in all he could tell him of the condition of India. Marian felt that the cup of her happiness was full. With her husband returned to her, her tall sons beside her, her pride was boundless. The days of separation were over, and it seemed that the future stretched in pleasant and peaceful prospect before them.

Hastings might have preferred a more restful homecoming ; but the warmth of his reception could not but be gratifying even to one so accustomed to public applause. It seemed a recompense for years of soul-deadening exile. But before the plaudits had died away, while the great of the land still vied with one another in honouring the late Governor-General, Hastings was to discover that the Archbishop's curiosity regarding his Indian career proceeded from something more than mere politeness. Within a week of Hastings' arrival Edmund Burke was on his feet in the House of

Commons. He gave notice of "a motion seriously affecting the affairs of a gentleman lately returned from India."

* * *

Warren Hastings was supremely unconscious of his danger. He had borne responsibility too long, and had fought too hard a fight to be dismayed by adverse criticism. He had sailed from India knowing that he would meet with hostility in various quarters ; that seemed to him the inevitable aftermath of distinguished service abroad. But he was unaware of the extent to which the Opposition had been organised against him. The warmth and friendliness of his reception did not entirely mislead him ; but, unversed as he was in party politics, he was lulled into a false sense of security by his ineradicable belief in the righteousness of his own actions.

It is certain that when he boarded the *Barrington* for his last homeward journey, not one qualm of doubt as to the justice and humanity of his administration assailed the conscience of the retiring Governor. Anxiety he had, some of it occasioned by his own financial position, and some by his doubt of the ability of his successor, John Macpherson, to whom he had handed the keys of office with some misgiving. The fact that Macpherson was his friend did not clear Hastings' mind of mistrust. His forebodings were justified, for Lord Cornwallis later stigmatised Macpherson's short term of government as "a system of dirty jobbery."

Regarding his own period of office Hastings had no qualms.

There was much to harden his complacency. All these years, since leaving England, he had longed to lead the life of a country gentleman. With Marian beside him to act her favourite rôle of hostess and adviser, he would be free to read, to compose verses, and to develop his estates. He was caught into the mood that affects many of those returned from the East. In his case, as with many others of less exalted position, this took the form of a certain recklessness of expenditure, and an altogether spacious attitude towards life. Impatient to put his schemes into practice, he posted down to the little grey village of Churchill, his birthplace, and on to Daylesford, the family estate which he had, long ago, dreamed of buying back. Here he was to receive his first great disappointment ; for Mr. Knight, the owner, refused to sell, although Hastings, in his enthusiasm, offered a sum far in excess of the value of the estate.

Marian's disappointment at this refusal was by no means so deep as that of her husband. While she would have rejoiced to see him attain his heart's desire her sense of a proper economy could not approve so recklessly generous an offer. As Nesbitt Thompson, one of Hastings' secretaries, had remarked : " her singular generosity and splendid taste were guided by an enlightened system of economy," prompted, he added, " by anxiety for the welfare of her husband." Hastings did not immediately relinquish hope of Daylesford ; through

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Mr. Knight's daughter he renewed his offer, only to receive a decisive refusal early in August. He then consented to take a furnished house in Wimpole Street, until such time as he and Marian could agree upon a suitable estate. Within a few weeks, however, Hastings grew restless. He had lived too long in crowds to take pleasure in them now. Weary of the sights and sounds of London he entreated Marian to go with him into the country. The request was a natural one, but Marian found it hard to sacrifice the various delights of the London scene. She could not find it in her heart to refuse Hastings, who was obviously tired and whose health was mending slowly. So the rest of the summer was spent in a series of journeys through England, visiting Bath, Cheltenham and Tonbridge.

Although a wistful thought of Daylesford still lingered in his mind, Hastings, in the following spring, decided to buy a smaller estate, Beaumont Lodge, near Old Windsor. This choice Marian readily approved. The house was pretty in an unpretentious way, with plenty of well-proportioned rooms and a large garden shaded with tall trees. They moved here in July, 1786, Marian delighted to have her own household gods about her once more ; the soft carpets woven in Benares, the silks and embroideries from Amritza and, more than all, the ivory furniture which had been the gift of the Mani Begum. Both the Hastings were particularly fond of ivory, and these couches, chairs and tables from Murshedabad, delicately designed and carved, were very beautiful. "Not designed for

fat folks or romps," said Hastings, "nor," he added with the sly brand of humour that was his, "proper for you, my elegant Marian, to use in the presence of your husband."

Curtains of shimmering pink and white silk, fringed and draped with sea green, hung before the windows of the large reception-room, which opened into the garden. In the summer they threw a pleasant light over the room, as Sophie la Roche remarked when she visited the Hastings here that year. She was ready to be impressed with all she saw, and was interested to note that two Indian boys waited at table. Marian told her that she had been obliged to send back the Indian girls for they refused to work any harder than in India and wanted to lead exactly the same life. But Marian does not seem to have risen superior to the temptation to paint a misleading picture of life in India, for she told her visitor that the heat made the limbs so languid that most of the time was spent in bed, from which people only rose occasionally to fetch fresh linen—this does not accord well with all we know of the boisterous life in Calcutta !

A German lady, introduced by Madame Schwellenberg, Sophie confessed herself curious to meet this woman about whose career so many rumours had circulated in Germany. The pungent spice of scandal had flavoured Sophie's interest in Marian. The story put forth by some of Karl's relatives was that the painter, after having "by dint of toil and talent" made a fortune in the East, had left his wife in India while he returned to his

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native country to buy a home for her and his sons. But she asked for a bill of divorce instead. Marian's faithful love for her mother, and other poor relatives had impressed Sophie, and she found in her hostess "traits of delicate beauty, a fine figure, elegant in all her movements, kind, modest and intelligent." "Mrs. Hastings," writes Sophie, "answered all my questions about her education and fortunes without the least concealment . . . her manner was that of a young friend meeting an elderly acquaintance again after a long absence . . . she spoke of her husband with grateful affection and respect, and gave frank intelligent answers to all my questions."

This was handsome of Marian ; but her countrywoman was to receive nothing but kindness at her hands. Sophie records gratefully that, when she acknowledged that she felt chilly in the garden, Marian wrapped a rich Indian shawl about her shoulders and insisted that she keep it. "She is now forty-one, lovely still," wrote the enthusiastic Sophie, who added that, "this woman fully deserves the happiness she now enjoys, after a multitude of sorrows."

Warren Hastings' mind must have been burdened with anxiety at that time, but he exercised over this elderly lady the attraction that he seems to have had for many women. His, she said, was "the simplicity of the true philosopher," and his utterances "never one syllable too much or too little." Fanny Burney who visited the Hastings at Beaumont Lodge shared this admiration for the great man, under whose spell she had come soon

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after his arrival in England. Her sister, Charlotte, was married to Clement Francis, Hastings' secretary, a circumstance which led to several meetings at the country estate. Fanny, who all her life was to cherish an ardent feeling for "that very intelligent and informing man," did not extend the same unreserved admiration to Marian. But she was ready to acknowledge that her lively manner "contributed largely to the evening's well-being."

Another of Mrs. Hastings' visitors at Beaumont Lodge was Hastings' goddaughter, Eliza Hancock—now the Countess de Feuillide, who came to England in accordance with her husband's express wish that his son should be born there. Philadelphia Hancock had cut herself adrift from her Austen relatives when she insisted upon taking her daughter to be brought up in France, and Eliza's marriage to a Frenchman had not been entirely pleasing to the family. The marriage was, however, a happy one. A house in Orchard Street was taken for her, and here in October her son was born, to be named Hastings after her own godfather. But little Hastings de Feuillide was delicate from birth, and lived only to complete his fifth year.

Marian was delighted to welcome, to cosset and advise the pretty Eliza, who was very gay and charmingly deferential to her god-parents, as she called them.

Marian was a born hostess, and her success was due, not only to her own social gifts, but to the indefatigable support of her faithful friend Mary

Motte, who made one of the party on most of these occasions. Mrs. Motte had steadily resisted the entreaties of her husband, who declared himself "deprived of the comforts of domestic happiness," and feared that her income was not sufficient to enable her to "live genteely" in England. It was indeed a valid argument, but for the fact that Marian had been generosity itself to her friend. Perhaps some pang of conscience smote her ; for if she had been responsible for the Motte marriage, she had been also largely responsible for the separation, keeping Mary Motte by her side all these years, while Thomas Motte eked out a miserable existence in India, and finally died at Serampore, where he had taken refuge from his creditors.

Marian's liberality arose not merely from the love of giving ; she was genuinely anxious to see those about her comfortable and happy. In this respect she was no less impulsive than her husband, who was the victim of every poor relation. Marian had, from the first, appointed herself fairy godmother to many of her relations in Germany. Sometimes, however, more than money was needed. Her brother, Charles Chapuset, had a family which was too expensive for his means, and Marian found it difficult to plan his family budget without damage to his pride. Through her good offices Hastings used influence to procure the eldest boy, Charles, a cadetship with the East India Company. The young man did not, however, justify these kindly efforts ; for he proved a waster, got into debt, and

was finally cashiered. Thereafter he wrote numerous begging letters to his aunt, who tried to harden her heart, but did not refuse help to the young rascal.

To an army of importunate relatives the Hastings' purse seemed to be endless ; Hastings, for his part, did little to destroy the illusion. His financial position might well have disturbed a more cautious mind. The immense fortune he was reputed to have brought out of India was non-existent. One might wonder where his princely salary went ; but Hastings had many obligations. His first wife's two daughters were, and continued to be, a drain on his resources. He had settled ten thousand pounds on Mrs. Hancock, and provided for his aunt, Mrs. Woodman, and another relative on his mother's side. He was indiscriminate in his charities. A tale of distress had only to be brought to him and he would relieve necessity in the easiest way—by giving money. It is said that in all minds there is a "blind spot" and Hastings' blind spot was money.

Marian had no such obscurity of vision. In matters of finance her eyes had a diamond clarity. Wraxall contends that "although Hastings might be poor, yet his wife was rich and rapacious." Her husband's enemies asserted that Marian amassed wealth by presents received from Indian potentates "usually conveyed in the shape of diamonds or other gems." It is difficult to quarrel with this criticism. Orientals love the luxury of feeling generous ; and Marian was prepared to indulge this amiable weakness.

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When a lady returns from the East sparkling with diamonds at every point, with even her riding habit embroidered with pearls and her gowns with gold, even the more charitable may draw their own conclusions. Mirabeau, who saw Mrs. Hastings at the opening of Parliament early in 1786, employed a cruel Latin quotation to describe her appearance. He compared her to Lollia Paulina, wife of the Emperor Caius, covered with jewels that came from the spoliation of provinces, while her uncle took bribes from princes of the East to maintain her in splendour. But the suggestion made by Macaulay, that Marian had a secret hoard, unknown to her husband, is scarcely tenable in view of after events, when the Hastings were so reduced in funds as to be uncertain how they were to pay their household bills.

* * *

Daily and hourly Hastings' enemies were massing. Nathaniel Halhed, Warren Hastings' protégé of Calcutta days and one of Marian's most sincere admirers, was shocked at the opposition to the former Governor. A charming but temperamental man, he had lately returned from India broken in health but with good spirits undiminished. Visiting the Hastings at Beaumont Lodge, he was horrified to learn that Richard Sheridan was in the forefront of the attack. He and Sheridan had been at Harrow together, and Halhed fondly imagined that, given the opportunity, his testimony to Hastings' virtues would at once convince the

playwright of his error of judgment. The result of Halhed's well-meant attempt to adjust matters was that the former school-fellows never spoke again.

As hints formed into accusations Hastings' friends grew alarmed. Yet, to outward appearance, the principals themselves were composed. Hastings was interesting himself in the crops on his estate of ninety acres. He had written to Nesbitt Thompson to ask that his Arab horse Suliman should be sent over, as he did not care greatly for English horses. He and Marian lived quietly although hospitably, keeping the early hours of most people returned from India. On such occasions as they appeared in London, Marian could not resist flaunting her jewels, as though challenging the critics to do their worst. It is not surprising that Sir Gilbert Elliott was moved to remark acidly :

“Major Scott assures the House *on his honour* that Mr. Hastings is a poor man, and has not returned laden with gold and jewels. In that case it seems odd to the world that so poor a man should let his wife wear jewels as valuable as the whole of his property besides, and should bid for estates, and make presents of such price.”

The last observation was a sneer at the jewels with which Hastings was rumoured to have bribed the King !

Warren Hastings was to find it easier to refute the accusations of extreme wealth than the criticism of his Indian administration. Even Francis was prepared to admit that Hastings had made no

private profit from his office. It was, he contended, in the name of common humanity that he called upon England to prosecute. Oh, Humanity, what cruelties have been committed in thy name !

Viewed from a London armchair many incidents of Hastings' Indian career appear indefensible. Punitive expeditions were placed on a level with the merciless onslaughts of savage tribes. It was said that the public conscience was awakened ; in truth, those who had not been fortunate enough to share in the profits of the East India Company, found relief in indignation against the methods by which they were secured. Nor are the moral strictures of Hastings' critics easily understandable. Conditions in England were by no means so humane as to justify a fierce condemnation of commercial activities in the East. The critics had apparently reconciled their consciences to the wholesale exportation of sickly children from London workhouses to the looms of the North ; to the foul conditions of the hulks and the prisons where men and women huddled together in filth and darkness, and to the scandal of the chimney-boys dying of " sweep's cancer " because they were never washed. The East India Company was no less a trading concern than the factories of enlightened England, the country where men were still being hanged for stealing sheep and children for stealing apples. But, in some inscrutable fashion, the starved Cockney urchin was judged less worthy of pity than the Indian villager who

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lived, at least, in natural conditions of sunlight and air, and not in rat-ridden garrets.

Not the least baffling feature of this situation was the attitude of the Indians themselves. While Burke was pouring moral scorn into his denunciation of Warren Hastings, Indians were showering honours and unctuous farewell addresses upon the retiring Governor, and Nesbitt Thompson was writing to his late chief :

“I have a large levee every Sunday morning at Alipore in which you are the constant subject of conversation. They (the Indians) all beg me to assure them that you will come back again, and though I tell them that I cannot give such hope, they still conjure me to tell them so.”

Hastings was doubly unfortunate, both in the strength and capacity of his opponents, and in the weakness of his own advocate. His choice of Scott as a Parliamentary representative was singularly unfortunate. Feeble, ardent and loyal the Major was to prove a more than doubtful asset. At the Spring session of Parliament, 1786, he was guilty of a decided tactical error in reminding Burke of his notice regarding “a gentleman lately returned from India.” It was an appalling blunder, for it is considered by some possible that the whole question might otherwise have been allowed to drop. At a juncture when a lofty silence might have been the most judicious course the gallant Major threw himself into the breach. Spurred by Hastings’ anxiety to vindicate himself, and his personal belief in his friend’s integrity, Scott was impatient that the

situation should be cleared up at once. It was a move which merely succeeded in drawing the enemy's fire. A stronger man might have been proof against Francis' gibes ; as it was Scott's offensive forced the hand of the Opposition.

Burke and Francis toiled on grimly. Arguments, statistics, innuendoes were all smoothed away by the ministerial supporters of Mr. Hastings. It seemed that the attack on the Proconsul would come to a similarly inglorious end as that on Lord Clive. A lesser man than Burke might well have collected his papers and retreated in good order. But the great advocate, fanatically confident of his cause, would not give up. On April 4th of that year he outlined a series of charges on the strength of which he demanded an impeachment. This brief was the result of years of labour, and it focussed every aspect of Hastings' career. Public opinion, tepid hitherto, now underwent a drastic change. Burke was known to be a hater of injustice and oppression. His generosity and warmth of heart were so famous that interest was at once aroused by his ferocious attack. Charges and surmises were piled high by the ablest orator of his day, and cynics and sentimentalists alike were ready to accept Burke's indictment. Horace Walpole embodied the general feeling when he wrote :

" Most other debates roll on the affairs of Mr. Hastings, who is black-washed by the Opposition, and is to be white-washed by the House of Commons. I do not know who is innocent or guilty ; but I have no doubt but India has been blood-washed by our countrymen. . . ."

A fresh volley of lampoons and caricatures soon burst upon the public. Many of these drawings would, at the present time, have been clearly in gross contempt of court. One of the grossest drawings represented Hastings holding in each hand a bag of £4,000,000 and being carried on the shoulders of Thurlow. They are wading through a sea of blood on which float the heads of Hastings' victims. It is interesting to note the liberties which were taken with Royal personages. One cartoon, entitled "Opposition Coaches," is a biting comment on Royalty's well-known partiality for the Hastings. While the Parliamentary coach is headed for the Slough of Despond the Royal coach is making for the Temple of Honour. It is driven by Thurlow, and the four horses bear the heads of Dundas, Arden, Grenville and Sidney. The Queen is seated on the roof, holding a goose and a basket of golden eggs. Within the coach sit Hastings and Marian, the latter with an ample bosom and a precarious crown. The King, armed with a musket, sits in the rumble. The coach bears the words "Licensed by Royal Authority," a legend which does not appear to have satisfied the "artist," for under the drawing appear the lines :

" The very stones look up to see
Such very gorgeous harlotry
Shaming an honest Nation."

It was not only in this caricature that Marian was pilloried. The *Rolliad*, the series of satires put forth by the Whig faction, published some coarse verses in which Major Scott is represented as

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addressing the King. After introducing Impey and Hastings he goes on . . .

"Now sniff! Rich odours scent the sphere,
'Tis Mrs. Hastings' self brings up the rear.
God! how her diamonds flock
On each unpowdered lock!
To every membrane see, a topaz clings;
Behold! her joints are fewer than her rings.
Illustrious dame! on either ear
The Munny Begum's spoils appear!
Oh! Pitt, with awe behold that precious throat
Whose necklace gleams with many a future vote. . . ."

This effort concludes with a perfectly unwarrantable gibe at Scott's admiration for the lady, and a suggestion that he aspired to her favours.

Both Hastings and Marian were taken completely aback by the savagery of Burke's onslaught. In a letter to Thompson, written about this time, Warren Hastings made a prophecy which leaves the reader with an uncanny sense of Hastings' prescience:

"Though the most complete acquittal should end the present trial my reputation will still be blasted by writers yet unborn, and will continue to be so as long as the events connected with it are deemed to deserve their place in the history of this country."¹

Hastings was indignant, but by no means despairing; for he, like his doughty opponent, was firmly convinced of the justice of his cause. He had, in fact, from the first welcomed an enquiry as the speediest means of clearing himself. Refusing to heed the advice of better informed friends he

¹ Thomas Babington Macaulay, whose essay did much to "blast" Hastings' reputation to two generations, was born in October, 1800.

determined to break lances with his accusers, and to appear in person. He at once composed an impassioned but somewhat diffuse defence which would surely, he felt, prove his innocence. His overweening confidence was not, however, proof against the brilliant oratory of Burke. This lengthy and hurriedly prepared document satisfied the pleader more than his audience. He left the House pleased with himself. "My credit now stands higher by many degrees than ever it did," he said.

In June of that year, 1786, came the rude awakening and the end of his hopes. On the 13th the debate on the Benares charges was opened in a crowded House. Fox began his attack in a speech which cleverly mingled truth with half-truth and was generously seasoned with venom. The enjoyment of the Government supporters was only a little less than that of the Opposition. Certain as they were that Pitt was a match for Fox they could afford to enjoy the brilliant rhetoric of the attack.

For a while Pitt fulfilled their happiest expectations. His followers smiled delightedly as he extracted the sting from each of Fox's arguments and hurled back counter arguments. Then, without warning, came the sensational change of front. The Prime Minister, who had been skilfully justifying Hastings' treatment of the Rajah, suddenly took up his stand with the Opposition.

"But . . . in proposing to inflict a fine of fifty lakhs," said Pitt slowly, "Hastings set a penalty utterly disproportionate to the offence, and there-

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fore disgracefully exorbitant, and he must, in consequence, find him deserving of censure upon this point."

Pitt's unexpected desertion of Warren Hastings was one of the most dramatic and also mysterious events of that eventful time. It sealed Hastings' fate. Utterly bewildered, the Pitt-ites meekly followed their leader into Burke's camp. Henceforth Hastings stood alone.

CHAPTER X

OUTRAGE, exaction, devastation and death ! the plunder of provinces, the distress of nations ! All nature blasted by the withering malignity of man ! The helpless and the unoffending—what is useful and what is honourable—the peasant and the prince—all prematurely swept together to the grave ! ”

Thus Burke in his vehement passion for justice. Listening to this harangue Hastings might have been pardoned for a violent sense of injury. Two and a half years of Parliamentary questions and debates had, however, gone to prepare him for this moment. Sober-minded and precise, he had mentally anticipated Burke's catalogue of abuse. In a letter to Thompson he had commented wryly on the ordeal before him :

“ I should not be too sanguine if the only crime laid to my charge was that I was concerned in the revolt of America.”

The self-confidence which had so deluded Hastings stood him in excellent stead during those weary years of alternate hope and despair. It was well for him that he was blessed with a mind which could turn inward to itself and there find balm. His love of country life, and the variety of his interests, undoubtedly made his lot tolerable as the trial dragged on. Marian tried to calm his anxieties and absorb something of the spirit of a man who could at such a time grow enthusiastic about “ the success of our haymaking.”

There was other cause for self-congratulation.

Like Moses, Philip Francis was stricken in sight of the Promised Land. The end towards which he had patiently worked, the prize he had coveted was denied to him. A large majority voted his name out of the list of managers of the impeachment. In vain he pleaded that he had no personal animosity against Mr. Hastings. William Pitt, turning a cold gaze upon Francis, knew better, and successfully rejected his claim on the ground of prejudice.

To Mr. and Mrs. Hastings a greater victory was the spate of eulogy that came from India. Try as he might Burke could not spirit away the tribute which India now paid her former ruler. For that brief instant India was united, as peasant and potentate combined to protest against the savage indictment. Seventeen gentlemen of Calcutta subscribed a thousand pounds each. This they sent to Hastings as a token of their respect and sympathy. Hastings acknowledged that but for this donation he would have been reduced to great distress.

When, in February, 1788, Warren Hastings stood a prisoner at the bar in Westminster Hall nothing approaching fear assailed him. The stream of caricature and innuendo had preyed upon his health and his spirits, but he remained stubbornly defensive. According to Marian he was actually *anxious* to be impeached. Years later she endeavoured to set down something of their feelings at this time: "My excellent Mr. Hastings . . . desire to be impeached that he might clear his character of various calumnies which had been

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throughout our acquaintance . . .” she wrote in her sometimes imperfect English.

If Hastings was surprised and taken aback by Burke’s virulent description of himself his own appearance administered a shock to many of those who thronged the Hall. This oppressor, this tyrant, the arrogant “ nabob ” returned laden with illgotten gains—what did he look like? The thoughtless pictured a coarse monster, a bloated face with avarice expressed in every feature. Instead there stood at the bar a small blue-eyed, bald-headed man, with a proud and dignified mien and a benign expression. The poet Cowper, who had been with Hastings at Westminster, could not restrain his indignation :

“ Hastings I knew thee young and of a mind,
While young, conversible and kind ;
Nor can I well believe thee, gentle *then*—
Now grown a villain and the worst of men ;
But rather some suspect who have oppress’d
And worried thee, as not themselves the *best*.”

The opening of one of the most celebrated trials in history was in the nature of a gala. For months before it had been the subject of most conversations, and attendance at it was desired by everybody. Gillray’s pencil revelled in caricature of the tickets of admission to the trial. One of these showed the Chancellor, Lord Thurlow, sitting on the stool of repentance, with a travesty of the trial scene at the foot. This scene was reproduced on fans and sold in the streets to the people who waited for entrance to the Hall. Yet, strange to say, although Hastings was being spoken of as a monster of iniquity, most

caricatures showed him as slight, meek and kind.

The fortunate secured a seat in the Duke of Newcastle's gallery, where a "handsome cold collation" was set out for those admitted by the Ducal ticket. There was a press of carriages along Whitehall, where the Guards were lined up to keep order. But in spite of such precautions many of the coaches had their panels smashed in the crush. The scene inside the Hall was described as magnificent. "I never saw so noble a sight," recorded one lady. "The Peers, Bishops and Judges were in their splendid robes, the ladies and gentlemen in full dress." But one of the Court ladies was frivolous. She thought the Lords and Members of the Commons looked "so little like gentlemen, so much like hairdressers." Mrs. Fitzherbert was with the Duchess of Gloucester in the Royal box; the Prince of Wales' bow to the Throne on entering was greatly admired for its grace. In short, all the beauty and the fashion of London attended in force, indifferent as to the outcome but eager to relish the drama.

It was not long since the fashionable world had flocked to public executions, when stands were erected along the Oxford Road, that the elegants might assemble in comfort to see the wretches travel in the death cart to Tyburn. The spirit of such enjoyment had not yet died; society had not had sufficient time in which to grow a heart.

The majority of those who thronged Westminster Hall had merely a vague understanding of the matter at issue. Many of the women wondered

what all the fuss was about, and had come out of curiosity to hear what Mr. Burke had to say. Most of the charges were of nepotism, jobbery, contracts given to unauthorised people, expenditure in excess of necessity. The fashionable could scarcely be expected to interest themselves in questions of army bullocks and elephants, the smuggling of opium into China, or of provisions for a fort. But two sensational subjects stood out—the arrest of a Rajah and the treatment of the Begums. Here was something on which sentiment could batten. They knew little and cared nothing about the Rohillas, and Nund Kumar was a mere name ; but the Begums, imprisoned, starved, tortured . . . here was the spice over which they could lick their lips.

There was scarcely a semblance of order in the Hall. Ticket-holders hailed one another by name, chattered, and held long conversations with their friends. Even Fanny Burney, her soft heart wrung with pity, looked upon the event as an opportunity to relieve the dullness of her life at Court. She could here meet acquaintances, and mingle with the world to which she felt she belonged. Commanded by the Queen to bring accurate reports of all that passed, Fanny was anxious to miss nothing. Everyone knew that the Royal sympathy was with Hastings, while Burke's name was " the most obnoxious " in the Royal household. His Reform Bill had displeased Royalty as much as did his prosecution of Hastings, whose wife was the Queen's protégée. Fanny was clever enough to remember and repeat fragments of the speeches ;

in fact it would have been difficult for a refined woman to forget some of Burke's utterances. She even tried to say something in Hastings' favour to the King, who said nothing but "looked very queer." But she was glad she had spoken.

Warren Hastings, standing there on that first day, in "a poppy coloured suit," was acutely aware of Marian's unhappiness. During the months and years that led to this day it was, he said, she who suffered most, "I only through her sufferings." In a sense her downfall had been almost greater than his. The contrast of that first triumphant autumn and winter in London and these bleak days of sorrow was too severe. She had revelled in her season of pride and splendour, had been—and knew it—the envy and admiration of all ; and now the bitter cup of humiliation was at her lips, and she must drink of it. Yet love, deeper and more secure now than ever it had been, made her turn a calmly smiling face to the man whose affliction drew him closer than ever to her heart. While his courage helped her to endure, her own courage verged upon defiance. No sackcloth and ashes for Marian ! Bravely she flaunted her gems and laces ; boldly she looked St. James's in the face, holding her head high and laughing to ease the pain at her heart.

"What he suffered during that period and what *mine* sufferings were during those seven long years God alone knew," she wrote later.

Yet to the world she showed that proud front, that undiminished gaiety. A mistaken attitude

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possibly, and one that earned her much adverse criticism.

"It is for Mr. Hastings I am most sorry when I see this inconsiderable vanity in a woman who would so much better manifest her sensibility of his present hard disgrace by a modest and quiet demeanour and appearance," wrote Fanny Burney. What Fanny and the rest of society did not know was that many of Marian's jewels were already in the hands of Nesbitt Thompson for sale in Calcutta.

Hastings might have been well advised to take up Marian's attitude. Temperamentally, however, they were poles apart. Personally unknown to most Members of the House, Hastings was under a serious disadvantage. During that season of waiting he had been steadfast in refusing the well-meant efforts of his friends to make him known to people of influence. He had indulged a false pride in refusing to attend levees or drawing-rooms, or employ any kind of diplomacy. He would not, he said, seek favour or attempt to break down prejudice. Now pity for his delicate appearance touched the hearts of even some of his prosecutors. William Windham, after a heated discussion with Fanny Burney (who called him a "bloody-minded prosecutor"), was heard to murmur: "I must forget that he is there, for how else can I go on?" Sir Gilbert Elliott, too, was touched into writing:

"I never saw Hastings until to-day, and had not formed anything like a just idea of him. I never saw a more miserable-looking creature. . . . He looks as

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if he could not live a week. . . . But the clearness of his guilt and the atrociousness of his crimes can leave no hesitation in anybody's mind. . . ."

Not live a week ! Warren Hastings was destined to live to a ripe—and happy—old age, and to see many of those who had sat in judgment on him to the grave. Burke, Pitt, Fox, Sheridan and Sir Gilbert himself obeyed the last call before Hastings.

* * *

Burke's opening speech ran the whole gamut of vituperation. According to him, Hastings possessed "a heart blackened to the very blackest, a heart dyed in blackness, a heart gangrened to the core." Such shock tactics led naturally to hyperbole.

"We have brought before you the head, the chief, the captain-general of iniquity—one in whom all fraud, all the tyranny of India are embodied, disciplined and arrayed." To Marian, impassioned and powerless, it was torture to listen. Her husband, "a swindling Mæcenæ . . . a spider of hell !" Hastings, however, smiled wanly, and could not restrain an admiration for Burke's superb oratory.

"For half an hour," he said, "I looked up at the orator in a reverie of wonder, and actually felt the most culpable man on earth."

Even fashionable women listened spell-bound and mopped their eyes. Some, however, declared that Burke's delivery was "so hot and hasty" that they could not understand him. But the greatest treat of all was yet to come. In June, on the thirty-

second day of the trial, Sheridan rose to speak. Society's interest was flagging ; the weather was hot and the London season at its height. There were other junketings to rival the brave " puppet show " in Westminster Hall. With Sheridan's appearance interest revived, and grew indeed to fever heat. Sheridan was the popular playwright of the day, and the fame of his great speech in the House in the previous year had spread. Here was the anticipation of glorious entertainment. Not free, by any means ; tickets sold at enormous prices, some paying no less than fifty pounds for entrance to the Hall. The less favoured were compelled to stand for hours in the street, where there was such a frantic rush that some of the ladies went in with torn gowns and dishevelled hair.

The dramatist was sure of gripping an audience predisposed in his favour. He had a fine plot to unravel, a golden peg on which to hang his eloquence. The wrongs of the Begums of Oude, the indignities to which they, poor helpless ladies of the purdah, had been subjected. These innocent women who knew nothing of the world beyond their quiet retreat had been terrorised into yielding up their jewels and their gold—and by whom ? Their own flesh and blood, son and grandson, at the instigation of the criminal now before the House. Could a stronger plot have been devised ! In four days Sheridan told the story in epic form ; it was a stirring performance, and a masterpiece of oratory. Sheridan was impassioned but dignified ; cruel and caustic, but he never descended to the

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vulgar ranting and coarse personalities into which Burke was betrayed by his burning indignation and his determination to right the wrong.

Ladies fainted from pure sensibility, others wept as Sheridan described Hastings as having "forced a dagger into the clenched hand of the Nawab, and pointed it at the bosom of his mother." They had craved sensation, and for four days they savoured it to the full. When his speech was ended Sheridan fell back exhausted into the arms of Burke and the proceedings were at an end. Parliament went into recess, and the prisoner was free to return to such consolation as his Marian could offer him.

* * *

The sudden death of Mr. Knight, owner of Daylesford, came, somewhat ironically, at this crisis in Hastings' affairs. Hastings was faced with the temptation to flout his accusers and fulfil his heart's desire. Never a prudent man in domestic affairs he was fortified in his resolve to buy the place by his implicit faith in his own destiny. Now, with his nerves frayed by his ordeal, he could not resist a gesture that would advertise his sense of well-being, and provide both himself and Marian with the soothing interest which they so sorely needed. An excellent offer for the Beaumont Lodge estate decided him. He could not endure the thought that Daylesford might fall into other hands.

Having made his decision Hastings threw himself into the project with all his accustomed vigour. A born administrator, he saw in Daylesford an outlet



EDMUND BURKE



MRS. HASTINGS
(from a painting by Ozias Humphrey)

for his powers of organisation. Daylesford once his, and Burke, Sheridan and Francis faded into the shadows before a succession of blue prints, schemes for cultivation and architectural drafts.

Marian offered no objection to her husband's plans for rebuilding the house and developing the estate. If she had some slight qualms about the advisability of buying Daylesford at such a time they were soon soothed. She, like Hastings, found it difficult to resist the luxury of a gesture. Besides, there was something in the possession of such an estate which gratified her social conscience. At any other time her practical nature might have curtailed the expensive projects and improvements upon which Hastings had set his improvident mind. But her feminine sympathies had deepened in the past few months. Essentially a managing woman she had been forced to sit silent while she heard her gentle and chivalrous husband described as a man whose "origins were low, obscure and vulgar," "a man bred in vulgar and ignoble habits." During those bitter days she had known the agony of a witness whose testimony has been ignored. She had known what it was to fight against suspicion, calumny and scandal in her own life, but secure in mutual trust she and her lover had won through. She had shown the gossips of Calcutta that she could be a dangerous enemy as well as a faithful friend. But in the majestic gloom of Westminster Hall she was merely the wife of a man on trial—perhaps for his life. She was of little more consequence than the draggled women who waited

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hopefully for their men outside the grim walls of Newgate. Although Burke's name had, from the first, filled her with apprehension, she had not anticipated the Jaganath of abuse which threatened to crush both honour and dignity. Strained and hurt, Marian and Hastings saw in Daylesford not only a refuge, but a prop to their outraged pride.

They were to need such support as the months dragged on, and it seemed that the trial would never end. While Burke drew breath, and Fox sharpened his scalpel anew, Hastings was able to occupy his time with experiments in arboriculture and building. But all the while the cancer of delay was eating into both himself and his wife. At first he had been able to occupy himself during the tedious hours in Westminster Hall with scribbling satirical verses about his opponents. Most of these quips are known, but one has not hitherto been quoted :

“ Why should I mourn my lot who daily see
That those who love their God are friends to me ;
Or why regret to know, as well I know,
That every thorough Scoundrel is my foe.”

Verse-making was something of a cult at that period, and some of Hastings' friends tried their pens at the same type of satire, among them Nathaniel Halhed, who stigmatised the prosecution as a “ miserable mouthing sport ” which

“ . . . dragged along its endless days
By fabricated, forced delays ;
While half the Peers from life retired
And Parliament itself expir'd . . . ”

Not even Hastings' stoicism was entirely proof against the thunder of words in Westminster Hall.

When the second year came and found him still in the pillory, he tried to call a halt, and exclaimed that, if it pleased the Lords he would plead guilty to such charges as had been already gone into. The inquisition, he said, "had been a hundred times more severe than any punishments their Lordships could have inflicted had I pleaded guilty." But he was informed that such a speedy termination could not be hoped for ; the trial must go on.

The blank spaces of time between the sessions of the trial, were, at first, almost as hard to bear as the days in the Hall. But the Hastings soon came to a state when they were able to let down a mental curtain that separated daily life from the stage setting of the trial scene.

Marian had, by this time, developed a kind of stoicism almost equal to that of Hastings. Her interests were becoming increasingly narrow. All other motives of life seemed to pass from her one by one. Her son, Charles, was now in Germany. After serving for a short time as an ensign in the 49th Foot he had obtained, through the good graces of Queen Charlotte, a commission in one of the Prince of Waldeck's regiments. Julius, also, had gone out into the world. Peter Touchet, Mary Motte's brother, had visited England in the previous year, and urged that Julius should accompany him back to India. Warren Hastings' influence procured the boy a writership with the East India Company, and he had sailed with the usual high hopes of making a fortune in the "land of regrets." His mother never saw him again.

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Marian had still one object on which to lavish her maternal solicitude. This was a little girl, Marian Brisco, who had been born in the Hastings' house in Calcutta. When her father, Colonel Brisco, sent her to England the Hastings took entire charge of the child, and she came to look upon them as her parents. "My beloved parents," she called them, "my angel Mama," "my dear, dear Papa." When the inevitable day of parting came, and the little Marian sailed for India in the care of Lady Shore, she wrote them pathetic letters from Portsmouth, declaring that she would "endeavour to model herself in every respect" on her adored adopted mother.

* * *

As the trial lengthened its days it became evident that the Hastings required some residence in London. In order that they might be on the scene of action, and possibly to watch the social reactions to their position, Marian bought a house in Park Lane. Having regard to the matters at issue this purchase was, perhaps, no less injudicious than her display of jewellery during the proceedings. But a house in Park Lane was her woman's way of shrugging her shoulders at the world. The house was at the Oxford Street end of "the Lane" overlooking the Park, a site now occupied by a block of flats. It was a fine mansion, with three coach-houses and stabling for eight horses. The money with which Marian bought this house was her marriage settlement, reinforced by the sale of some

of her jewels. Her desire for a town residence did not obscure her sense of values ; for six years later she sold the house to Lord Rosebery at a higher price.

The years went by. By the end of the fourth year Hastings had grown almost indifferent to its outcome. The general public had come to regard the trial as a stale and not very interesting farce. Many of the peers who had been present at the opening were dead ; their successors were less interested in the proceedings. As Hastings truly remarked : " I was arraigned by one generation and acquitted by another." Even masterly vituperation grows tedious, and the rhetoric of the advocates palled upon the public after a year or two. Caricatures lost their sting, and indeed turned upon the accusers. In one drawing ("Cooling the Brain, or the little Major shaving the shaver") Burke is shown as a raving lunatic chained to the ground, while being shaved by Scott.

The pamphleteers directed their pens more and more to current events. France was in revolt against Monarchy, and England was horrified by news of the excesses committed in the name of Liberty. A tragedy of the Revolution touched the Hastings personally ; for Comte Jean de Feuillide, the husband of "sweet little Betsy" Hancock, fell a victim to the Terror.

New personalities, dangerous personalities, began to file before the British public. Danton, Marat and a stocky little Corsican lieutenant combined to drive the sallow face of Warren Hastings from the broadsheets. With such a Cause before him, a

lover of freedom such as Burke could scarcely allow even the villainy of Hastings to engage his full attention. In 1790 there appeared his memorable *Reflections on the French Revolution*, which caught the public ear and went into eleven editions.

The inevitable reaction set in. Not only were the Dukes' festive "collations" long a thing of the past, but the length of the trial put an end to public interest in any of the parties concerned. Empty benches and galleries presented a significant contrast to the crowding and pressure, the scramble for places, which had marked the earlier stages. Those who had applauded the persecution in Westminster Hall were now disposed to pity the victim; the game of cat and mouse does not permit of infinite variations. It was in this comparatively favourable atmosphere that Hastings defenders rose to quash the indictment. Hastings seemed to have found eloquence in his adversity, and his calm dignity gave his words forceful effect after the foul irrelevances which had gone before. On the seventy-third day of the trial he impressed even the indifferent with his obvious sincerity.

"To the Commons of England, in whose name I am arraigned for desolating the provinces of their dominion in India, I dare to reply that they are, and their representatives persist in telling them so, the most flourishing of all the states of India. It was I who made them so. . . . I gave you all, and you have rewarded me with confiscation, disgrace and a life of impeachment."

In the last year of the trial Lord Cornwallis arrived from India. His testimony, confirming Hastings' contention as to the condition of India,

gave a great impetus to the defence. Cornwallis paid eloquent tribute to Hastings' administration, and stressed the contentment of the Indian population under his rule.

The trial ended in June, 1794, but the verdict was not given for another year. To Hastings and Marian the further delay was irksome, but no longer tragic. Royalty's well-known interest in the accused undoubtedly inspired the Hastings' party, and the revival of public sympathy in their favour seemed a happy augury. A further advantage lay in the possession of trusted friends behind the scenes. The ex-Chancellor Thurlow threw himself into the fray with a grim zest. For fifteen years he had championed Hastings ; for ten he had cherished a respectful admiration for Hastings' wife. He now constituted himself advocate in the debates on the trial, and directed the evidence with consummate skill.

On April 23rd, 1795, the prisoner again knelt at the Bar. The Lord Chancellor Loughborough grunted out sixteen questions to each peer, and demanded a verdict of Guilty or Not Guilty to each. The issue was not long left in doubt. Hastings was acquitted on all counts, and unanimously found Not Guilty on the charge of taking bribes from Nund Kumar and the Mani Begum.

When the verdict was communicated to him Hastings gave a slight bow, but otherwise betrayed no emotion. And, with that little bow, he stepped from the pillory in which he had stood for seven years, and became, once again, what he had long aspired to be, an English country gentleman.

CHAPTER XI

THE end of the trial found Warren Hastings high in the public estimation, but financially ruined. Although he had rightly predicted that "writers yet unborn" would blast his reputation to posterity, he was, at the time, regarded as a victim of the Whig party. Not only his intimate friends, but many unknown to him felt that the battery of brains and oratory which had been brought against him had, by its very failure, established his probity the more firmly. But his affairs were in a critical state.

The trial had cost £100,000, some of which had been expended in subsidising pamphleteers and the printing and distribution of tracts. Macaulay states in forthright fashion that Warren Hastings had bribed the press to support him. Like many of the great essayists' assertions this is without documentary proof. But, as the suborning of the press was, at that time, by no means uncommon, Macaulay may not have been wide of the mark. Burke made a similar charge when he declared in the House of Commons that Hastings had spent £20,000 in corrupting the press. Like Macaulay, he was reticent about proof. At all events the trial had not only absorbed Hastings' entire fortune, but had left him deep in debt. For the present, however, his chief sensation was one of relief.

Rejoicing at the acquittal was held on a splendid scale. Five hundred people sat down to the banquet given by the Bengal Club in London. Marian was once again in her element, presiding

at the feast, with Lord Thurlow beside her, fêted and toasted almost as much as the victor and his attractive wife. Bells rang at Daylesford and throughout the country-side, where all Hastings' neighbours held entertainments in his honour. The gentlemen of Chipping Norton gave a dinner at the principal inn of the little town, and other squires "threw open their houses and cellars" to the country people. Hastings' dearest friends, Sir John and Lady D'Oyly, gave a garden party at which Hastings' portrait was placed in a pavilion draped with garlands and flanked on either side by the portraits of Lords Mansfield and Thurlow. All the world, in fact, seemed to have run wild with joy at the verdict; and Hastings, knowing himself a ruined man, smiled benevolently upon all, the while his mind revolved round the problem of how he was henceforth to live. He confided to a friend that he was uncertain whether he could pay the expense of posting down to Daylesford.

Addresses and congratulations continued to flow in on both Hastings and Marian. One of the most affecting was the tribute from the officers of the Bengal Army. When allowance has been made for the flowery language of the address it remains evidence of Hastings' popularity. His affectionate interest in India remained alive to the end. "I love India a little more than my own country," he once observed.

"... The energy and severity with which you have been for so many years prosecuted, the magnanimity and fortitude you have shown during your trial, and in

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declining to solicit support, even when all the ability and power of your native country seemed combined against you, place you in a point of view the most envied, the most honourable, for your enemies have raised a monument to your fame. . . .”

The address goes on to express a hope which had been in the minds of many of his friends :

“ . . . May your Sovereign, by conferring honours upon you, prove the value he has for such a subject, and by doing so increase the approbation and attachment of a free and generous people. . . .”

For himself Hastings did not crave the balm of a title. But there was Marian, whose weakness in this respect was known to him. He felt that some redress and compensation was due to her, and this seemed a graceful and appropriate form for it to take. It was, Hastings afterwards said, the Prince of Wales who had encouraged this hope of a title in Marian’s mind. He told the Prince this quite frankly in explanation of his own wish for one.

“ Although she is the best and most amiable of women——” said he.

“ She is so,” the Prince interrupted courteously.

“ —she is still a woman, and would prefer her participation in a title to any other benefit which could be bestowed upon me.”

When they parted after this interview the Prince took Hastings’ hand and professed his regard with so much fervour that Hastings exclaimed impulsively : “ Sir, I know not how it is, but I have never yet parted from your Royal Highness without added sentiments of gratitude and attachment.”

The Prince of Wales, easy-going and genial, was kindly disposed towards the ex-Governor, but much of his affability arose from his desire for popularity. The title was never bestowed. Lord Moira, to whom the Prince referred Hastings, was extremely tactful, but he made Hastings realise that if a title were conferred it would be in the nature of a favour to the Prince from those who had been hostile to Hastings in the past. To this Hastings replied proudly :

“ My Lord, I will never receive a favour without an acknowledgment ; still less will I accept a favour from men who have done me gross personal wrongs. . . . I beg that the affair will go no further. I am content to go down to the grave with the plain name of Warren Hastings, and should be made miserable by a title obtained by means which would sink me in my own opinion.”

One is rather doubtful whether Warren Hastings would have rejected the prospect in so high-handed a manner had he been afforded opportunity to talk the matter over with his practical Marian. He spoke on an impulse which he may have, later, regretted, especially when he saw many of his contemporaries raised to the Peerage. It was a bitter disappointment for Marian, who had confidently expected to be Lady Daylesford. But their friends were consolatory. Opinion on this head was gracefully expressed by David Anderson, who said that “ Plain Mr. Hastings, in circumstances rather straightened, is the noblest and most illustrious sequel to the character of the late Governor-General.”

The Prince, when he became Regent, was a trifle bombastic in his appreciation of Hastings, whom he described as "one of the most deserving and at the same time one of the worst used men in the Empire."

"He has been made a Privy Councillor," said he. "I shall not stop here ; he shall be honoured as he deserves . . ."

Hastings, clear-sighted as ever, was slightly sarcastic about this effusion. "It was not worth while to speak of more," he said, "when more, as the event has shown, was not intended."

* * *

No junketings, no complimentary addresses, no consolatory friends could quickly drive from the Hastings' minds the memory of their sufferings. The wounds were still raw. While Marian smiled on Thurlow, and entertained her guests, her thoughts were heavy with concern for her husband. Knowing his sensitive courage she felt that he must carry an invisible scar through life. Hastings, with the calm good sense which distinguished him at all times, was ready to throw himself whole-heartedly into the rustic occupations he had so long craved. But that her fears were well grounded is proved by the incident of twenty years later when both Hastings and Sheridan were guests of the Prince Regent at Brighton. Prompted by the good-natured Prince, Sheridan greeted Hastings and asked him to believe that the part he had taken at the trial was not due to his personal opinion.

"I was then a public pleader," said he, "whose duty it is to make good the charges which he is commissioned to bring forward."

Warren Hastings drew back a step, looked steadily at Sheridan, bowed low, but said nothing.

"Had he," said Hastings later, "confessed as much twenty years ago he might have done me some service."

Daylesford and peace ; this was the deep desire of both Hastings and Marian. Gone were the days when Marian had enjoyed flaunting her jewels and her charms before the appreciative world of St. James's. They both now longed for a respite from the sounding town. But there were many matters to be settled before they could attain their heart's desire. Much of the brunt of their financial difficulties fell upon Marian. It was she who commissioned Richard Johnson, now a member of a banking firm in Stratford Place, to find a purchaser for the Park Lane house. It was she who had urged that they could no longer afford to keep up two establishments. A purchaser for the house was eventually found in Lord Rosebery ; but the Roseberys of that time were not wealthy, and there was a good deal of delay and discussion. Marian wrote to Johnson, with her accustomed spirit, "What trouble his Lordship has given us ! By the Lord ! I would not sell him another house if I had one to dispose of."

Although she had a strong head for business Marian Hastings was guilty of strange inconsistencies. More than once she expressed her

concern regarding her husband's accounts. We find her writing anxiously to Richard Johnson :

“How much has Mr. Hastings overdrawn at your Bank ? Pray let me know a little about it. My enquiry does not proceed from curiosity, but from a wish to save my dear husband anxiety of mind. . . .”

Yet she does not seem to have made any serious attempt to reduce their scale of living. Hospitality at Daylesford was as much a matter of course as it had been at Hastings' House. Hastings frankly acknowledged his own weakness in that respect in a letter to the Directors of the East India Company :

“My expenses are none of them such as deserve the character of extravagance ; yet I cannot conform to that strict line of economy which another might who possessed by inheritance an income of the same measure as mine, and had formed the habits of his whole life to it. . . .”

In other words, neither Hastings nor his wife ever forgot that he had been Governor-General and she the first lady of Calcutta.

Daylesford House was, in itself, a temptation to entertainment. It was a house which called for guests ready to admire the splendour of its equipment. The outer view was sufficiently imposing, but not particularly magnificent. It was one of the typical houses of the time, with plain and sober, but satisfying lines, roomy and comfortable. There was extensive stabling, coach-houses, cellars and larders, hot-houses, a walled kitchen garden, and the grounds were beautifully laid out. The interior of the house was more stately than the



DAYLESFORD HOUSE

.. Typical of the times . . . roomy and comfortable . . . "

exterior suggested. A winding staircase led up from a circular entrance hall, the roof supported by Ionic pillars. There were wide corridors, and an immense reception-room, with a smaller drawing-room, and a library and morning-room. These were no more than were to be found in any gentleman's home in these spacious times. It was the luxurious and splendid quality of the furnishing and decorations which called forth the admiration of guests. The Hastings seem to have lived surrounded by ivory and gold. The famous ivory furniture had been reinforced by further presents from the Mani Begum to "my beloved daughter, the light of mine eyes, who art dear to my soul, Mrs. Warren Hastings." Not one, but every reception-room in Daylesford House was furnished with ivory. In the great drawing-room, its long windows draped with curtains of pale blue satin painted with flowers and edged with spangles and silver lace, nearly all the furniture was of ivory. Couches carved with tigers' heads, many chairs of the same pattern, solid ivory ottomans, richly inlaid with gold, a writing-table with handles and locks of wrought silver, footstools and caskets, all of ivory.

Their bed was ivory, and Marian's boudoir, a lovely circular room with a domed ceiling and a view over the country-side, had more ivory chairs and couches, painted and inlaid with gold. Writing to Thompson regarding the safe carriage of his furniture, Hastings had said: "Mrs. Hastings desires me to tell you that the Begum's ivory chairs are of very great value, not of little as you seem to

estimate them . . . she begs that they may be sent by a ship that will swim ! ”

Warren Hastings had devised a beautiful home for his adored wife. He had given personal attention to every detail, even to the carving of the marble mantelpieces with Indian subjects. Rare books and prints, paintings, china and curios, some of these set with rubies and emeralds, all these in profusion made Daylesford House one of the most beautiful in the county. Well might Eliza de Feuillide, visiting her godfather there, describe it as “ really a little Paradise, the house fitted up with a degree of magnificence and taste rarely to be met with.”

It is not difficult to realise that Hastings had spent a fortune on the purchase and rebuilding of Daylesford, and spent it at a time in his affairs when he would have been better advised to husband it for emergencies. It had cost him about £60,000, although the purchase money was only a little upwards of £11,000, with an annuity of £100 a year to Mr. Knight’s family. But in his excuse may be pleaded that the possession of his ancestral home had been the aim of his life, the end towards which he had worked almost from boyhood. This excuse he did, in fact, put forward to the Directors of the East India Company when he appealed to them for help :

“ It was the spot in which I had passed much of my infancy, and I feel for it an affection of which an alien could not be susceptible, because I see in it attractions which that stage of my life imprinted on my mind and my memory still retains. It had been the property of

my family during many centuries, and had not been more than seventy-five years out of their possession.'

Warren Hastings had drafted a petition to the Government pointing out that, since he had been acquitted on all charges brought against him, it was only just that he should be reimbursed for the expenses of the trial. But Pitt, still hostile and smarting with his defeat, refused to present the petition. The Prime Minister found it convenient to forget that his own grandfather had been dismissed the service of the East India Company for malpractices of which Hastings had been accused.

Once again Hastings was compelled to turn to the Directors of the Company, and, after some discussion and opposition, he was granted a loan of £50,000 without interest and an annuity of £4000 a year. This was generously dated from his arrival in England, more than ten years earlier. This relieved his immediate necessities, although it was later found expedient to make some readjustment in the grant.

Marian, whose influence over her husband was great, might reasonably have checked some of his extravagances. But she seems to have made little effort to do so. Financially adroit herself she could but bemoan his lack of business ability. To Johnson she wrote :

"What a grievous thing it is that my husband will not settle all his affairs ! how easy would his mind be if he was to know exactly what he owes *and what is due to him*. I entreat him oftener [*sic*] on this subject and pray him to settle his affairs ; he promises but does no like to look into the state of his affairs."

But in the matter of keeping open house at Daylesford Marian was a ready offender. Accustomed as she was to a vigorous social life she could not entirely absorb herself in Hastings' hobbies of stock-breeding and agricultural experiments. The events of the past few years had widened rather than narrowed their circle of friends, and it afforded her some consolation to throw open her beautiful home to them. Adversity had quickened her sympathies, and made her more ready to share the joys and woes of others.

Little Marian Brisco, who had written those heart-broken letters from Portsmouth to her "dear, dear Papa and Mama," was not Marian's only protégée. She had numerous godchildren; in fact there was, among their friends, scarcely a family which did not include a little Marian or a young Hastings. The D'Oyls, the Impeys, the Andersons, all were frequent visitors at Daylesford. And Mrs. Sands, the widow of the Captain Sands who had so greatly admired Marian's action at Patna, said that she would bless the kindness of Mr. and Mrs. Warren Hastings until the day of her death.

There were other and more insistent claims upon Marian's heart—and her purse. In the early months of 1794, shortly before the end of the trial, Marian had the joy of welcoming her beloved son Charles back from Germany. But she was not to retain his undivided affection very long; for Charles fell in love. Where he met Charlotte, one of the nine daughters of Sir Charles Blunt, one of

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Hastings' colleagues, is not known, but it was, in all probability, at Daylesford. In Charlotte's Commonplace Book there is an amusing quip, written by Mrs. Leigh, wife of the Rector of Addlestrop, an adjacent parish.

"Should Charles Imhoff be asked
'Who's the maid to your mind?'—
His reply would be 'Blunt'—
Yet his heart would be kind.

Nor would he e'er allow
That his Charlotte did scoff,
If to the same question
She should answer, 'Im' off!'"

The Blunts were a good old family, and Charlotte was pretty and charming ; but Marian opposed the match on the reasonable ground of Sir Charles Blunt's inability to provide a dowry for his daughter. He was reputed to have brought a large fortune out of India (one of the charges at Hastings' trial concerned a contract given to Sir Charles), but even Marian must have acknowledged that dowries for such a number of daughters would have placed a strain upon the largest fortune. As, in those times, a dowry was considered indispensable to every marriage, Marian realised that, in this case, she would have to be the provider. Charles had no means beyond his pay as a lieutenant in the British Army, to which he had reverted after his seven years' service in Germany, and Marian was ambitious for her sons, as well as solicitous for their comfort.

The young people stood firm in their devotion. Charlotte had spent two seasons with her father in Bengal, and having (miraculously, considering the

demand for wives there) escaped the matrimonial net, felt that she was predestined for her Charles. Charles, for his part, probably reflected that his father had faced a similar situation when the Landsturm of Morlach had so sternly disapproved the woman who was now his adored mother.

"If I am permitted to marry the woman of my choice I shall become the most domestic man alive," he confided to Nesbitt Thompson.

And so, in Charlotte's Commonplace Book there are these two entries: "Charlotte Blunt, 1790," and, on the next page, "Charlotte Imhoff, February 19th, 1795," the latter date being the day of her marriage to Charles.

It was characteristic of Marian that, having capitulated, she did so with a good grace. She adopted no half measures but settled £20,000 on Charles, and £10,000 on his wife, while, in 1797, she increased this by another ten thousand.

"This sum will enable him to live *very comfortable* with his beloved Charlotte, and my mind will be easy respecting my beloved children. Whatever my own fate may be let me see my children happy and comfortable," she declared.

While one is forced to admire the spirit in which Marian distributed her wealth the whole question of her means opens ground for conjecture. The year 1791 is said to have found the Hastings affairs at their most involved. Hastings was finding it difficult to repay the Company's loan, and Marian had had some unfortunate losses through the failure of a Dutch firm. There was also the sum of £12,000

which she had entrusted to Major Scott for investment, and which he is said to have used for his own expenses during the trial. Whether this was so or not Marian's friendship with "the little Major" had suffered an eclipse. Writing to Charles some years later she remarks that Scott is, "as he always was, full of deceit."

Marian's jewels had realised a large sum—just how much is not known—and the sale of the Park Lane house had brought in another ten thousand pounds. But there were other profitable negotiations. One of her diamonds, said to weigh no less than eighty-six grains, had been sold in Russia for £8000, and it is safe to say that, anticipating the worst, Hastings had, at the time of the trial, conveyed all his worldly goods to his wife, who sent as much as possible out of England. As Thompson had said, it was always in her husband's interest that Marian arranged her monetary affairs. In 1797 she was requesting Richard Johnson, the banker, to keep the deposit money (on the house in Park Lane) "for my use, or rather for my beloved Mr. Hastings !¹ as he may want cash." At the same time she directed the bankers to remit £200 to her mother in Germany.

Marian's generosity to her mother was a pleasure as well as a duty ; for the old lady was worthy of her kindness, and Marian never failed in gratitude. There were other calls upon her resources which were not so pleasant. Warren Hastings' two step-daughters, Caroline and Elizabeth Buchanan, were

¹ Note of exclamation in the original.

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graceless and improvident women. From the first they had occasioned Hastings anxiety, and Marian, on her marriage, had accepted his responsibilities in her usual large-hearted manner. The girls were not entirely dependent upon Hastings, as they had a small income. But their father's people neglected them, and Hastings had arranged that they should live with a Mrs. Forde, whose husband had been lost in the wreck of the *Aurora*.

During their years in India the Hastings had received at intervals disquieting reports of the behaviour of the young women. The eldest grew "tired of gentility" and eloped with a corporal. This marriage turned out unhappily, and she embarked upon another, which afforded her no greater comfort. Now, the victim of two disastrous marriages, she was plaguing her step-parents for assistance to open a bonnet shop. By way of disarming criticism she acknowledged her faults, but pleaded that "I had neither father or mother to take care of me in early days"; a plea which did not come appropriately from a woman of forty! Hastings behaved in his accustomed manner; he sent her money. But she continued to be what his nephew, Thomas Woodman, called "a sturdy beggar," and eventually the Hastings refused further assistance.

* * *

The years were passing; tranquil years free of anxiety except the ever recurrent one of money. Visitors came and went; long letters were written,

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friendships kept in the constant repair recommended by Dr. Johnson. The seasons, the crops, the happiness and misfortune of neighbours, all these were ground for comment. Into this quiet life Marian invited Mary Wilkes out of sympathy for the death of John Wilkes, the notorious agitator. "For a visit to friends who live so retired as we do" would not agitate her feelings at "the loss of so excellent and beloved a father."

It is impossible not to suspect that the "retired life" had become something of a pose with Marian. She was a young woman still, only fifty-three, and in her innermost heart longed for the excitement of town life. It was, Hastings said, she who benefited most from their occasional visits to what Marian called "the Metropolis." When in the Spring of 1800 they paid one of these visits, Hastings wrote to Sir John D'Oyly :

"We have been in town almost a complete fortnight which we have passed in the most dissipated manner ; that is to say we have resigned ourselves wholly to our ancient friends and acquaintances, and console ourselves with the reflection that a life which would be sin in others is with us a moral duty. It is certainly a pleasing one, and the more so as Mrs. Hastings has not suffered in her health, but . . . is better than I have known her for some years . . . and everybody says so."

Marian's husband had exulted too soon ; for she fell seriously ill of a fever on their way back to Daylesford, and had to be left at Salthill, while Hastings returned to his home. Here he was shocked to learn that Julius Imhoff had died in the previous September. A letter from Nesbitt Thomp-

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son enclosed an extract from a Mr. White describing, in the measured language of the period, the manner of Julius' death, following on "an uncommonly hot and oppressive season." Climate and overwork had killed poor Julius Imhoff at the age of thirty-one.

"He has," wrote Mr. White, "fallen a sacrifice to his sense of duty in remaining at Midnapore where his active and zealous services were conspicuously employed in quelling insurrections and quieting a long-neglected district. . . . His illness commenced in January last when he was in the employment of Collector, and as he had no assistant to leave in charge of his office he continued to carry on the duties himself. . . ."

The letter went on to speak of the esteem in which Julius had been held, and Thompson added that "even in the circumstance of his death he proved himself worthy of his mother and yourself. . . . I never knew a man of a more feeling heart."

Poor Julius! A sad little love story entwines itself in his history. When Marian Brisco met him in Calcutta a few years earlier she wrote that he was "a very prudent, good-tempered lad, beloved and esteemed by all who knew him." There is more than a suggestion that Julius thought of Marian as more than "prudent and good-tempered," and fell half, if not wholly, in love with her. He had, however, formed an alliance with an Indian consort, by whom he left three sons. There was some idea that he was married under Moslem law to this lady, who was of good birth, but the fact that he had his sons legitimatized proves this to be mere supposition. He was disturbed when Marian-became engaged to a

Mr. Barton, and wrote to his mother : " I fear she will repent her choice . . . he has not only a bad temper, but is inferior to her in understanding. . . ."

Julius retained his regard for Marian Barton, and bequeathed her a diamond ring and pin, with the portrait of his mother, sent out to him some years before.

Marian Barton's marriage was unhappy, as Julius had prophesied, and some years later she was back at Daylesford, with a little girl of four, another Marian, and as dear to Mr. and Mrs. Hastings as her mother had been.

Marian was too ill to be told of her son's death. Although the news had been received in April it was June before Hastings dared to break it to her. The secret lay, he wrote to Sir John D'Oyly, " with a dreadful damp upon my mind, but I cannot withhold it many days more." Marian, he added, was well, and had gone to the Byberry races.

Strangely there is no record of how Marian received the sad tidings. But it is evident that from that time she clung the more closely to Charles, and to his wife Charlotte. " The two darling children of my heart " she called them. Like most people of generous impulses, Marian was capable of admitting her errors of judgment. She had opposed her son's marriage, but her recantation was sharp and decisive, and she took Charlotte to her warm heart.

To the end of her days Marian Hastings found pleasure in the society of young people ; she was alert in their presence, ready to share their confidences. Hers was not, however, the morbid

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sentimentality which often disfigures the relationship between young and old. Her sense of humour and her capacity for enjoyment drew her to the young. "I have a heart trembling alive to everything that is dear to me," she once wrote. Hers was indeed the "feeling heart" inherited by her poor Julius.

There is some slight mystery about the portrait of Marian which was sent out to Julius, and bequeathed by him to Marian Barton. There is ground for a supposition that this was the picture painted by Karl Imhoff and sent to Warren Hastings when he was in Madras. Obviously Karl must often have used his wife as a model ; but no portrait of her attributed to him has been found. It would have been natural for Marian to send his father's work to her son ; but enquiry has failed to produce it.

CHAPTER XII

THE Hastings' life at Daylesford, although retired, was by no means inactive. Like many others they found the country life even more productive of interests and excitements than life in towns. Both Hastings and Marian were in advance of their age in a sensitive love for animals at a time when dumb creatures were given little consideration. They even made pets of their cows and calves, which came to their call. One of Hastings' last actions on leaving Calcutta had been to consign his favourite horse, Suliman, to the care of Nesbitt Thompson, who, he wrote to Marian, "will be kind to him for your sake and mine as long as he lives." As we know, he later sent for this horse. In one of Marian's letters to Charles Imhoff there is a touching little postscript :

"Poor Tiger ! I feel for you, for I know *too well* how the loss of such an attached creature can affect the heart, but remember *we must all die.*"

Riding had always been one of Marian's amusements, and both she and Hastings were early astir, riding round their estate. Like most people returned from India they kept early hours, but Hastings was dismayed to find that his old friend, Sir Elijah Impey, did not share this love of the morning dew. "I wish he could be induced to rise earlier," he complained to Halhed. Like many elderly gentlemen Hastings had his fads. One of these was the proper method of brewing tea. He was very particular and even fussy about this ; he made his own and breakfasted alone on tea and

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bread and butter. He would then sit with his guests and, while they ate a substantial meal, read his verses aloud. This may have gratified Marian's pride in her husband's poetic capacity, but was probably rather trying to the patience of his guests. For Warren Hastings was a statesman rather than a poet ; even his devoted stepson, Charles Imhoff, demurred to Gleig's suggestion of publishing the verses in a separate volume. This idiosyncrasy of Hastings impressed Eliza de Feuillide so much that, after a visit to Daylesford, she sent her godfather a breakfast-cup and saucer, painted with her own hands, so that he would remember her "at least once in every twenty-four hours." Eliza had not long remained a disconsolate widow. Little more than a year after her husband's tragic death she married her cousin, Henry Austen, brother of the novelist. The Austen family, although they were fond of Eliza, did not entirely approve this match, as Henry was ten years his wife's junior.

Hastings seized upon every pretext to break into verse and if any action or aspect of his wife afforded him material for his pen he was delighted. Invited to contribute to Charlotte's *Commonplace Book*, he recorded, with verse and illustration, the fact that, during one whole winter, a robin was in the habit of flying into Marian's room every morning while she bathed. Here was an opportunity not to be missed, and the result was :

A SONNET

" Says Robin to Bobin : While every wing,
Thrush, Blackbird and Linnet, their spirits have lost,



SIR CHARLES AND LADY IMHOFF
Marians "two darling children of my heart . . ."

B E L O V E D M A R I A N

While the sun fails its wonted refreshment to bring,
And the Woodlands no longer their harmony boast ;
What preservative power have your senses engrossed
That you seem to be proof against hunger and frost ?
That your plumage is sleek ; now and then too, you sing,
And your tail is as pert as a Robin's in Spring ?
Says Bobin to Robin :—Each morn I survey
Unarrayed, some celestial form, I suppose :
For no being of Earth could such beauties display.
(Not the *crumbs*, which her provident bounty bestows
Have availed, what I suffer'd like you, to allay) :—
'Tis this, gives me strength, warmth, and life for the day."

The pencil drawing shows two robins in conversation. One has a sad air and a drooping tail, the other ("Bobin") has his scraggy little tail feathers held proudly up.

There was an open door to Daylesford ; a constant succession of guests. Marian was always delighted to see their friends around her liberal table. The bitter experiences of the past few years had taught her the significance of fair weather friendships. At Daylesford, far from the false values of town, she could look across her table with pride and confidence. Here were no great personages to be wooed for their favour. Illustrious names were there, but they belonged to those who had come to love Mr. and Mrs. Hastings for themselves, and who took delight in their enlivening conversation. Sir John and Lady D'Oyly and their son Charles, who was Marian's godson, were frequent visitors ; young Hastings Anderson, who was so complimentary about Marian's youthful looks, said that he "enjoyed real happiness at Daylesford." The Halheds brought a pretty daughter with them, and of course Mary Motte was

frequently of the party. She was honoured by being invited to meet the Duke of Gloucester at dinner. The Duke, nephew to the King, paid several visits to the Hastings, both at Daylesford and in London, where he and Hastings frequently attended service together at St. George's, Hanover Square. When he stayed at Daylesford the Duke preferred to have no other company than his host and hostess in the house, although there was always a dinner party in his honour. He appreciated the simplicity of the life at Daylesford, void of ceremony as it was, and took great pleasure in the society of both Hastings and his agreeable wife. His Royal Highness knew very well that neither would have dreamed of presuming on the intimacy; they never forgot the Prince in the guest.

One of Marian's most welcome and adventurous guests was her mother, the Baroness Chapuset, who paid her first visit to England after the signing of the short-lived Treaty of Amiens. Marian went up to London to meet her, and would have preferred to break the journey back. But the Baroness was firm in refusing such an indulgence, which she regarded as rank extravagance. She insisted upon pushing on to Daylesford, where they arrived in the middle of the night, the Baroness less weary than her more delicate daughter. Hastings found the old lady of eighty-three most excellent and amiable company, although conversation between them was restricted by the fact that she spoke not a word of English! Marian, as interpreter, had to accompany them on every occasion, a proceeding which tried

her strength and good nature to the utmost. But her love and gratitude were never failing, and the Baroness was so gratified to find her beloved daughter in such splendid surroundings that Marian had not the heart to disclose the anxieties which never ceased to lurk behind all this seeming grandeur.

Marian was glad of the opportunity to speak her native tongue once more. Although she had not once visited Germany since she left it as a very young married woman, there was a soft spot in her heart for the country of her birth. Writing to Charles in Germany she describes some of the beauties of Dresden, and wishes she could be there with him and his wife. She adds : "Avaunt ! vain wishes, do not disturb my repose or happiness !" Charles had gone to Germany to see his father, then on his death bed, and Marian tells him that she is pleased that he had seen his half-sister, Amalie, "and the rest of her kindred ; it will be a gratifying reflection that you have done what a dying father requested." Charles Imhoff continued his friendship with his German relations, and left a legacy to his half-sister Marian.

India and all that early life seemed like a dream to Marian now. She had suffered a slight pang when Thompson wrote from Calcutta : "A new race is springing up here, and in a few years more there will scarcely remain a person in Bengal who could claim the honour of Mrs. Hastings' acquaintance." Calcutta, where she had been fêted and admired, where some of her greatest triumphs had been

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scored, had forgotten her ! The experience of all who turn their backs on the East comes afresh to each individual, to be borne with philosophy or regret. Marian had a hardy spirit ; she had no mind to let the remembrance of past glories embitter the present. She had been a Queen in Calcutta ; she would now take her place as the Queen of Daylesford, " the Paradise of your own creation " as the ever-admiring Thompson called it.

* * *

Less than a year after the Baroness's visit the shadow of Napoleon fell darkly over England. Bonaparte's pose of the world's peacemaker had ended with the breaking of the Treaty of Amiens. The fear of invasion touched not only the country people, but the better informed. It is typical of Nesbitt Thompson's unabated and almost pathetic reliance upon the opinions and judgment of his old chief that he should write to him : ". . . If *you* would find the attempt impracticable *he* probably will . . . "

To the eyes of the panic-stricken every passing cloud took on the shape of " Old Boney." The villagers talked of little else but the " Army of England " said to be mustering on the French coast. Marian was rather amusingly light-hearted about the prospect. " The weather does not seem favourable for the invasion," she wrote. " It rained all day yesterday, and to-day it snows and wets and is a most gloomy day." Although Hastings was firm in his conviction that the invasion would not occur

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he still believed in "keeping his powder dry." He took immense trouble to train a few yokels of the tiny parish in the use of the musket. He could muster no more than six men, but wrote to his brother-in-law, Woodman, for the old musket which he had left with him when he first went to India. It makes a rather pathetic picture, this of the old man huddled on his horse, Charles Imhoff, now a Colonel in the British Army, in attendance, and his old porter as instructor of the tiny force. It all came to nothing, for the military authorities did not recognise the existence of the Daylesford Musketeers and they were soon disbanded.

Marian was glad to have her son with her on any pretext. She was subject to transient moods of depression which had to have an outlet, and Charles was her usual confidant. Her reliance upon him was almost pathetic. Hastings, in a letter to his stepson, expresses Marian's great fondness for her Charles : "Your dear mother will not go to town unless you are there, and cannot make your home at Daylesford." Charles Imhoff had a house in London, 6 Portugal Street, where the Hastings sometimes stayed during their visits to town. But it was the dearest wish of Marian's heart that Charles and Charlotte should make their home at Daylesford. She even put forth a tentative suggestion that Charles should sell out of the Army : "There is only one way it might be accomplished, but that possibly my son would not like to do. But when I reflect on past events, and look forward to the future what may be your ultimate fate in the

Army I sicken at heart. Is there no possibility to retire with honour? Can *we* not be made the instrument of your selling out?"

This was in 1808, when the fear of invasion was past, but war still loomed over them. The letter goes on to her own perplexities. "I am tormented by my brother with letters. The marriage of his daughter to Baron Obernitz cannot take place without her having 10,000 kronen. The King of — will not permit his officers to unite themselves to any woman without such a *Towry*. . . . He is gone to fight the French. . . ."

It was obvious that Marian was being called upon to supply the necessary "towry" for her niece. She was firm in her refusal to do this; but the matter was taken out of her hands by Baron Chapuset himself. He sent his daughter to England to stay with the Hastings! Marian was justly annoyed at this high-handed action. She did not want the girl, and, wife-like, put the onus of her refusal upon Hastings. He did not, she said, like "permanent visitors." But it was too late to draw back; Louise had started on her journey, and, in due course, arrived at Daylesford.

It was typical of Marian that, having yielded to the inevitable, she did so gracefully. Louise Chapuset came, was seen, and conquered not only Marian, but Hastings. Marian had refused a dowry to the pretty German girl, but the time came when she could refuse her nothing, and Louise became the spoiled darling of the household. And when young Thomas Woodman, Hastings' nephew, fell

in love with her, a deeper bond was established. Thomas Woodman was in Holy Orders, and Marian, ever ready to help those near to her, hoped, through her friendship with Madame Schwellenberg, to gain him some Court preferment. But the old lady's death frustrated this scheme, and eventually Thomas was appointed, first to a living at Brackley and later to the parish of Daylesford. This last was a poorly paid living, but the "sweet aunt," as Louise called her, was at hand to supplement their income with a hundred pounds a year from her own purse.

To the end of their days both Mr. and Mrs. Hastings were besieged with requests for favours of one kind or another. Much of their voluminous correspondence contains references to some call for services or advice. Hastings was even asked to read a play by a desperate young man—a plea which the slightly pedantic old man could not resist. But not all his literary acquaintances were so tiresome. Henry Austen, returning from a visit to Daylesford, sent Hastings his sister Jane's novel, *Pride and Prejudice*, and begged his opinion of the work. Warren Hastings expressed such boundless enthusiasm as to delight the brilliant young novelist. "I long to have you hear Mr. Hastings' opinion of *P. and P.* His admiring my Elizabeth so much is particularly welcome to me. . . . I am quite delighted with what such a man says about it . . ." she wrote to her sister Cassandra.

The Hastings' leisure was largely occupied in arranging, and in some cases restoring the fortunes

of their acquaintances. Hastings' warmth of heart has never been in question, but it is likely that the rôle of Chancellor of the Exchequer appealed to his vanity. Withdrawn so tragically from public life he seized upon the opportunity to concern himself with the anxieties of others. Writing to Sir John D'Oyly he refers to his growing feebleness : " You must not expect long letters from me," he says, " they remind me too much of my decay of memory. . . ." His sole object in writing had been to secure employment for some unfortunate person.

Happily, Marian was at her husband's elbow to throw her good sense into the balance of charity. She could not easily be deceived, and more than one unfortunate found to his cost that the lady of Daylesford held the purse-strings with firm, although judicious fingers. Young Charles Chapuset, her nephew, was one of these. Shipped out of India in disgrace he had confidently turned to Daylesford. Marian's estimate of his character was short and decisive. " I wish he was out of the Kingdom ! " she wrote. " It is a cruel thing upon us all to be plagued by such an ungrateful fellow . . . he has given us much trouble, and I greatly apprehend will give us more." But her conscience and pride would not allow a Chapuset to starve, and she sent, through her Charles, the sum of fifty pounds. But, knowing herself imposed upon, Marian took the step of deducting the amount from the yearly allowance she made to the young man's sister Louise. This seems hard upon Louise, but it is highly probable that Marion recompensed her by

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some other means. Hastings, at all events, was prepared to protect the young woman from her unworthy brother, for he wrote to Charles Imhoff that he must "obviate any attempt that he might have meditated against Louise's peace by visiting Brackley."

On the other hand, when a crisis arose in Nathaniel Halhed's affairs, Marian was instantly prepared to make sacrifices on his behalf.

"Oh, my son," she wrote to Charles, "my mind has suffered much of late. . . . Our beloved friend Halhed has been much distressed by the late unlook (*sic*) for events. . . . Mr. Templer informed him by letter that he must not draw any more drafts on their Bank, he being indebted to them above £4000. What was to be done? . . . I had none at my bankers: to borrow we were too proud. . . . No, I mean too *honest*. . . . The result was that Mr. Hastings signed a bond for his debt. . . . I have, of course, relinquished the interest of the £8000 he owes me, but alas! that is but a drop in the £34,000 which he owes. . . . Poor excellent man!" she exclaims,

and goes on to say that she is prepared to make as much change as possible in their family expenses.

"The horses shall go. . . . I can well do without a chariot. . . . Do not expect us at Jersey this summer; all that is pleasing to the heart and mind must be shut out from the two inhabitants of Daylesford. . . ."

Marian's resolution of self pity did not last very long; in less than two months she mentions that "my new chariot is *snug* at the coach-makers. If I go to town next month I will have it out. . . ."
Marian's little affectation of having renounced the

world and its vanities came out strongly at times. She told Charles that her "incomparable husband" had "again taken flight for the Metropolis," and urged her to come after him, for she will find good apartments at Wake's Hotel in Lower Brooke Street. She assures her son that she "feels great reluctance in encountering the world," but will go in May for a week or two, "but not for pleasure, my Charles!" she added on the arch note which runs through much of her correspondence.

London was amusing, but Mr. and Mrs. Hastings found themselves even more attracted by Brighton, the little seaside village lately transformed by Royal patronage into a modish playground. Society frothed about the genial Prince who was the ruling spirit of the place; the air was electric with gaiety and intrigue. Jaded elegants threw off their London languors and frolicked in the sunshine and the breeze. Their gaily painted cabriolets streamed along the Steyne where money-lenders, jockeys and pugilists jostled with lords and their ladies, who sought, in the careless atmosphere of Brighton, relief from an incredibly dull Court. Brummell minced impudently in the tight, frogged coats, strapped pantaloons and magnificent neckcloths which sent a challenge to the legitimate leader of fashion, his rival and master. Through it all lounged the Prince with the beautiful voice, his raffish good looks not yet impaired by riotous living. There was much in that rakish little town to distract his thoughts from luckless Caroline of Brunswick and the miserable failure of his marriage. If



THE PRINCE REGENT
(by Hoppner)
“ His raffish good looks . . . ”

not happy he was contented with his horses and his mistresses, and the adulation and popularity which were undoubtedly his.

Whatever his critics may say there was a radiance and charm about the First Gentlemen of Europe at this period. It was not mere careless good nature which inclined him to favour the ex-Governor and his still attractive wife. Although "faithful to Fox," the Prince had always shown them special marks of honour even in their darkest days. There is a pretty story told of how he recognised the Hastings as they drove through the streets of Brighton, and stopping their carriage, carried them off to the Pavilion of which he was so proud. They must dine with him on the very next evening, he insisted. Thackeray has poured out scorn on those who dined at the Prince's table, naming them toppers and gamblers. Warren Hastings was neither, and his sincere admiration for the Regent throws a kinder light on that august person's character than some historians would allow. In past years Hastings had adjured his wife not to be proud that she was compared to the Queen of Sheba, but to "let the Queen of Sheba, if she knows of it, boast that her name is united to yours." It could be said that George the Fourth, if he knows it, might boast that Warren Hastings, the least subservient of men, felt an impulse of friendship for him.

After the quiet domesticity of the country both Marian and Hastings found the elegant frivolity of Brighton stimulating and amusing. The lady of Daylesford was still young enough to enjoy ex-

changing light-hearted banter with the young dandies with their exaggerated shoulders, high cravats and rouged cheeks. Infected by the Prince's love of mimicry and practical jokes, these gentlemen vied with one another in eccentricity. One would jump every available railing in order to amuse the Prince ; but not all jokes took such athletic form. Sir John Lade made his bid for sensation by dressing his lackeys in harlequin liveries ; and Marian found herself particularly amused by the antics of the "man in green." This seeker after novelty paraded on the Steyne dressed entirely in green, even to his watchchain and seals, while it was said that he lived entirely on green foods in rooms furnished in the same colour.

The Hastings were in a privileged position to enjoy the varied delights of the bustling resort. Although appreciated and entertained by the Prince they were favourites rather than idols, and had little or nothing to gain from Court favour. These visits to Brighton refreshed Marian and helped her to feel herself still in touch with the social round which had once formed her life. But in those days of active letter-writing even Daylesford was not without its minor excitements and its share of comment on the events of the world beyond. Hastings himself never lost touch with the social circles of London. He might declare that the road to London was the road to ruin, for travel by post-chaise was expensive and people of the Hastings' standing seldom used stage-coaches.

But although their interests centred chiefly round their own home, Hastings and his wife were still vividly interested in the scraps of gossip which floated in from the world beyond. When, in 1802, the Impeys returned from a visit to Paris they had a delectable morsel of news to present to their friends. One may imagine how fat Sir Elijah chuckled as he told of their meeting with "Madame" Grand, then openly living with the great minister Talleyrand, and on the point of being married to him. A faded beauty now, good-natured and silly, the lady of many lovers but not one love. Lady Impey had more to whisper into Marian's ear; for who else had been in Paris in that month of May? Both Mr. Francis and Mr. Grand—the latter discreet enough to ignore his former wife in public, although a general belief was that his mission was to secure, through her influence, a substantial post. Gossip and more gossip; the times were exciting. The scandal of Lady Hamilton and the Victor of the Nile . . . how she flaunted in her opulent beauty, the confidante of a Queen, defying convention and proud of her conquest of England's hero. Marian was never to know how her name had been linked with that of the famous lady whose lovely face smiled out of Romney's canvases.

"She cannot be presented at our Court," sneered Horace Walpole, "only such over-virtuous wives as the Duchess of Kingston, and Mrs. Hastings—who could go with a husband in each hand—are admitted."

Marian could afford to smile at such gibes had

she been aware of them. She had retained her share of Court favour. Her friendship with the King's daughters, the Duchess of Gloucester and Princess Sophia, endured through the years. They wrote to one another in the most friendly terms, "My dearest Mrs. Hastings" from "your affectionate friend, Sophia." The Queen, in the midst of her distracting anxieties regarding the King's health, had a few thoughts to give to Mrs. Hastings, whose charming deference had so pleased her in other years. The whole nation was sharing the Royal anxieties, the Regency Bill was under discussion. The King was better . . . the King was worse. . . . So it went on until, in 1811, the magnificent, flamboyant, but ridiculed and unhappy Prince was proclaimed Regent.

* * *

In the light of all we now know of the later years of Warren Hastings' life it is strange to recall that some earlier writers have described him as dogged by "humiliation, bitterness and disappointment to the end of his life." One fails to reconcile this portrait with that of the cheerful old squire of Daylesford reciting his madrigals at the breakfast-table and extending his wise counsel and philosophy to all who appealed to him. That he was able to preserve his sense of humour we can judge by the lines he wrote under his favourite portrait by Lemuel Abbott. This afforded him an opportunity to pay tribute to his beloved wife as well as to hit

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at the managers of the trial. The lines, which begin :

“ A mouth extending fierce from ear to ear . . . ”

end with the verse :

“ Yet he has friends ! And they,—nay (strange to tell
His very wife, who ought to know him well,
Whose daily sufferings from the worst of men
Should make her wish the wretch impeached again)
Believe him gentle, meek and true of heart—
Oh, Hastings, what a hypocrite thou art ! ”

But if Hastings was not an embittered man, he had his moments of disappointment. Accustomed to a position of active responsibility he could not reconcile himself to inactivity in an eventful world. Like many old, but mentally alert people, he could not realise that age had crept upon him. When, in 1812, the fear of invasion again seized upon England, the ex-Governor who had always craved employment in his country's interests, wrote to the Prince Regent offering his services “ to be employed in any way which your Royal Highness may think fit to command them.” As Hastings was now nearly eighty years of age it is understandable that the Regent did not see his way to avail himself of the offer. But Hastings was not to be left unhonoured or unrecognised. A belated sunset glory was to be his, and in a sense, a complete retraction of all the rebuffs he had endured. It was with deep emotion and thankful hearts that the many friends to whom he was dear heard of that great occasion when Warren Hastings once more entered the House of Commons ; but not, this time, to plead a desperate

cause. Summoned as a witness in connection with the renewal of the Charter of the East India Company, his appearance was received with cheers by the Members; and when, after having been examined for more than three hours, the old man retired, the whole House rose and uncovered their heads. A few days later his friend the Duke of Gloucester called for him and drove him from his hotel to the House of Lords. They sat together, the old man and the kindly middle-aged one, until Hastings was called in before the Committee. Again he was greeted with cheers, once again the company rose, hatless when he left; all, it is recorded, except the few who had been managers at his trial; they remained seated and covered. The Duke waited for him, drove him home, and called next day to enquire for him.

Marian was delighted to the point of tears at this tribute paid to her beloved husband. It seemed that Fate was brightening their lives in many ways. Charles, her adored son, had received a Knighthood of the Order of St. Joachim with permission to use the title in England. Apart from affection her pride in Charles had a deeper root. Aware as she was that many of the Chapuset men had proved unworthy and unstable, she felt extra pride in her son's integrity. As Charles rose steadily in rank and in the world's esteem, passing from one responsible position to another, she saw in each advancement a justification of her pride and love.

Hastings' affection for Charles Imhoff was equal to Marian's. As he wrote to Lord Cornwallis in

hope that he might find a place for Charles on his staff in Bengal : " He deservedly possesses as large a portion of my affection as I could feel for a son of my own blood . . . he is a man of ingenuous manners and of the strictest honour and integrity. . . "

Marian was to have added pride in her husband as honours came to him. A year after his appearance before the Lords and Commons he was elected a Privy Councillor ; but Hastings' own pleasure in this was tinged with regret. " I am both satisfied and pleased with it," he wrote to Charles and Charlotte, " although when I turn my thoughts on another person I would gladly forgo all honours that this world could confer. I cannot suppress a rising pang of regret that this is one which I cannot share with her."

That year, which saw the defeat of Napoleon and his subsequent abdication, found the Hastings once again in London, taking part in the festivities to celebrate the restoration of Louis the Eighteenth. The King was escorted from Stanmore to London in great state, and there were many receptions and gatherings, including a banquet given by the Gentlemen of India to the Duke of Wellington, at which Hastings presided. The toast of " Mr. Hastings and the Government of India " was drunk with " long, loud, and repeated shouts of applause "—in fact it might have been supposed that the Chairman and not the Duke was the hero of the occasion ! The Directors of the East India Company followed with another banquet and a similar toast.

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A week of gaieties began with the Queen's Drawing-room, at which both Marian and her husband were received "most graciously" by Her Majesty. Marian enjoyed these social gatherings, but she felt compelled to watch carefully over her beloved husband. The month was July and the weather extremely warm; Hastings was nearly eighty and feeling the strain of his years. But he stood up nobly to the late hours and the bustle. The Prince Regent's fête, which they both attended, lasted from ten in the evening until six the next morning, at which hour they returned to their hotel. It is not surprising that Hastings slept most of the day! His own comment on the occasion was expressive of his pride in his wife who, he said, "continues to possess her good looks . . . at an age when many women have lost theirs." This he asserted to his friend, Edward Baber, was more pleasing to him than the restoration of Louis the Eighteenth to his throne. Two days later they were on the road again, to visit the Vansittarts at Bisham Abbey, and returned to Daylesford after "a burning journey."

So much excitement naturally took its toll. Although it had a tonic effect upon Marian the London whirl had taxed Hastings' nervous energy. Throughout the visit he had complained of fatigue and illness, but the animated scene had taken his attention from himself.

Although Hastings' interest in the surge of events beyond his quiet estate had never flagged, Marian had felt, for some years past, that she must assume

a share of his responsibilities. Earlier Hastings had written of "a great revolution in the state of Daylesford . . . through my abdication. . . ." The truth was that Marian had grown alarmed by the failure of Hastings' numerous and costly experiments, and had taken on the management of the farm. It was very well, she felt, to grow turnips and exult in the hay-crop; but the breeding of horses, and the cultivation of tropical plants and trees were doomed, from the first, to failure. Far better, she felt, that Hastings should occupy himself with his verses, his long letters to friends, his schemes for the propagation of Persian literature, than continue to deplete their resources with his hobbies. Hastings was perfectly resigned to any suggestion of his beloved Marian's. He was aware of his own limitations, and had never hesitated to acknowledge that her business head was a stronger one than his.

Marian found the work arduous, but she persevered. She was out, on horseback, at seven in the morning, and again later in the day, "the more delicate but the more daring," said he. From that time most of the farm accounts are written in her hand—a flowing hand which Hastings lovingly called her "fair scrawl," but far easier to decipher than the writing of some of her female friends. Mrs. Motte, in particular, wrote a shocking hand, and had a complete disregard for punctuation.

Marian threw herself into the project with her usual whole-hearted enthusiasm. Even when away from home her mind centred on the farm. In one

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of her few letters to Hastings that have been preserved, she says : " I think it would be best to sell the fat cow ; you will get good price for it, and if we want any part of her we can have it."

But even advancing years did not limit the activity of Hastings' projects. At the age of eighty-three he was seized with the desire to demolish and rebuild the Daylesford Church. He kept a meticulous day to day account of the work as it went on, until two days after his eighty-fourth birthday he was able to write : " Divine Service performed this day . . . "

* * *

Marian was watching her husband with anxious eyes. He was always cheerful, always occupied, but it was evident, to her loving eyes, that he was failing. Outwardly he showed few symptoms of his age. He had always taken enormous delight in penmanship, and he still wrote long, chatty letters flavoured with humour, to his many friends, and to Charles Imhoff whom he loved more than many sons are loved. He was never prosy or dull either on paper or in conversation ; but his memory was variable, and he sometimes found himself writing one word when he meant another. He had attacks of slight dizziness and complained—he who seldom complained—of noises in his head.

In the Spring of 1818, however, he seemed so well that Marian yielded to his suggestion that she should pay a visit to London with Charles and Charlotte. Now, as always, he put her wishes

before his own. He wrote to Halhed at this time, with a touch of his old whimsical humour : " After the age of four-score it is the wisest resolution that a man can come to." He regretted her absence mostly " because it deprives her of the new beauties of the Spring, which is bursting upon us with all the arrears of delight," he wrote rather wistfully.

Marian was now seventy, but age could not wither her enjoyment of opportunities to bask in the light of Royalty. And this visit afforded her the pleasure in abundance. Mary, Duchess of Gloucester, held a reception, to which Marian went with her dear son and daughter-in-law. Princess Sophia, her particular friend, was there, and the Queen received her with her usual kindness. The visit to London was prolonged by a few days because the Prince Regent was giving a dinner party which he was anxious Marian should attend. Altogether the month spent in town had been at once enjoyable, and valuable, in that it kept Marian in touch with Royal circles. She returned to Daylesford in June, after a very tiresome journey, " in perfect health and gaiety of spirit," after a month of what Hastings called " tumult, parade and festivity."

But Marian's gaiety of spirit was to be short-lived, Hastings was never again to see the Spring flush the trees and fields of his beloved Daylesford. He spoke of going to town for advice about his eyes, but realising how feeble he was, suddenly relinquished the plan. The Duke of Gloucester had arranged to pay them a visit in July. Great as was the store Marian set by such visits, she felt that the

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honour must be declined, and took upon herself to write to the Duke postponing the visit. She had arrived at this decision a few days previously when she and her beloved husband took what proved to be their last drive together. On leaving the coach he staggered, and would have fallen but for her supporting arm. Yet, a few days later, he was writing hopefully in his diary : " My health better, but strength much diminished." That was almost the last entry in the record he had faithfully kept since the date of Marian's departure from Calcutta. In little over a month later he was dead. He knew that the end was near. " A few hours remain which are to separate us from one another forever," he wrote to his " dearest friend," Colonel Toone.

Warren Hastings died with his loved ones around him. It was his dear Charlotte who gave him his last drink—a few drops of cold water. " He put his blessed hand on mine, for he could not speak," she said. " Such sweetness ! Such kindness ! Never one impatient expression ever escaped him."

" I am going at last," he said, " I feel that I am going at last. Oh, I am grateful."

" Your voice is still strong," she told him. " God will not take you from us yet . . . "

" You do not know what I suffer," he whispered. " God bless you, my children. . . . I leave you in Marian's care. . . . She will bless you when . . . " His voice failed. He turned aside, and drew a handkerchief over his face. When they removed it they saw that he was dead. Even in death he would not expose his weakness.

CHAPTER XIII

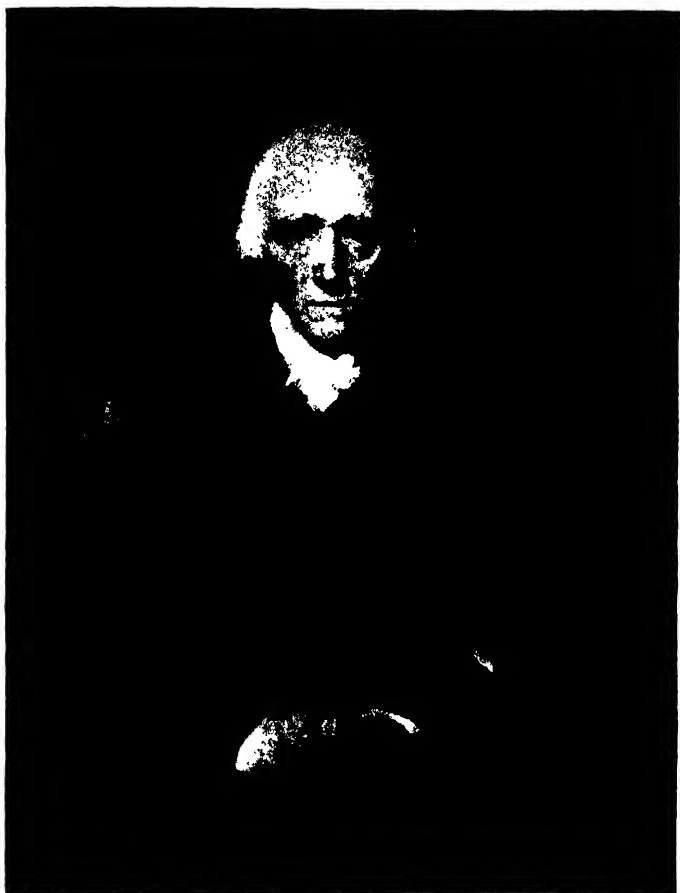
WARREN HASTINGS' last thought was for his beloved Marian. In the letter to Colonel Toone, dictated from his death-bed, he asked him to intercede on her behalf with the Directors of the East India Company that "the dearest object of my mortal concerns" should not be left "in a state of more than comparative indigence." She had, he continued, "been the virtual means of supporting the powers of life and action by which, in so long an interval (I think thirteen years), I was enabled to maintain their affairs in vigour, strength, credit and respect, and, in one instance, when she was in the City of Patna, and I in a seat of greater danger, she proved the personal means of guarding one province of their Indian dominion from impending ruin by her own independent fortitude and presence of mind. . . ."

The Directors did not see their way to grant this request, and Marian was left to face comparative poverty. The total value of the estate was small ; for they had lived at Daylesford in the grand manner, with a number of servants both inside and outside the house. There was also a mortgage of £600 on the place, money raised by Hastings to pay off the last of the debts of the impeachment which had crippled his declining years.

Hastings had had many friends, and their sympathy for his widow was heart-felt ; but no letters of condolence, no kindly thoughts, none of the innumerable tributes to his memory, could rob her of that tragic sense of being forever alone.

Grief branded her heart and the whole perspective of life was changed. Fortunately, she was the happy possessor of a temperament which found a bracing quality in adversity. She was determined not to renounce Daylesford, but the struggle was to be a long and a hard one. In a letter to Sir Charles D'Oyly, her godson, she said : " I am striving with all my power by retrenchments and economy to retain this ever dear spot on account of the blessed being who once derived such delight from its possession."

One of Marian's deepest concerns was the perpetuation of her beloved Hastings' memory ; this must, she felt, be kept green and alive. The Directors of the East India Company had decided upon a statue to be erected at the East India House, but the project went forward in too leisurely a manner to please her impatient spirit. Neither was this, in her opinion, a sufficient monument to the man who had done so much to build the British Empire in India. She was content that her beloved's mortal remains should lie at Daylesford, beside the church of his own building, but his name should, she felt, be in Westminster Abbey among the " Proud names who once the reins of Empire held." Meanwhile, in Calcutta, her godson, Charles D'Oyly, was active and sent a full description, with illustration, of the memorial which was subscribed for by the inhabitants, both European and Indian, of Calcutta and the provinces. But England tarried, and finally Marian took upon herself to place a tablet and bust in Westminster



WARREN HASTINGS

(by Laurence)

This portrait was painted for Mrs. Marian Barton, god-daughter to Mrs. Hastings.

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Abbey. The inscription, a lengthy one, states that "he was appointed by Parliament the first Governor-General of India and was thrice re-appointed by the same authority . . . he ruled with a mild and equitable sway . . . while he secured to the inhabitants the enjoyment of their customs, laws, religion and the blessing of peace, and was rewarded by their affection and gratitude. . . ." Beneath the inscription are the words "This memorial was erected by his beloved wife and disconsolate widow, M. A. Hastings."

Marian found some consolation in the letters which told her how deeply Hastings' death had been deplored in India. Everyone there, Sir Charles D'Oyly assured her, felt that they had been deprived of a friend. Writing to Marian Barton, with whom he evidently had a close friendship, the young man says that the older Marian had, in him, the same affectionate friend she ever possessed, one who could not have loved his parents with more fondness, nor felt more gratitude for their kindness than he had for the Hastings. He concludes by hoping that he will hear of her "renovated happiness."

There is no better testimony to Marian's integrity and charm than the friends she made during her husband's lifetime and retained after his death. Nathaniel Halhed, Sir John D'Oyly and David Anderson at least must have been acquainted with her at the period when, as Mrs. Imhoff, she lived in her echoing house by the Hooghly. The scandal then rife must have been known to them, and they

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were all men of open life and stainless honour ; yet their respect for Marian was as great as their affection.

Marian was, indeed, blessed in her friends. Long and loving letters came from them, all urging that she should not exclude herself from the social world.

"I am satisfied," wrote the Duke of Gloucester, "that the change of scene and the society of friends will be beneficial to your health and spirits. . . . Your friends have a claim upon you to visit the Metropolis every year . . ." and he is "Your very affectionate friend and very faithful servant, *William Frederick.*"

The Duke's letters to Marian were frequent and occasionally confidential, as when he told her of his reconciliation with his cousin George, now King. The Duke was, in the phrasing of the time, an amiable and obliging man who had been originally marked down as a suitable husband for the unfortunate young Princess Charlotte. Her marriage to Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg left him free to marry his own love, Princess Mary, daughter of George III. No one knows what cause for disagreement had occurred between himself and the King, but the reconciliation took place "in a manner highly satisfactory to me," he confided to Mrs. Hastings.

Intent upon keeping her beloved husband's memory alive in the minds of his friends, Marian caused several mourning rings to be made. These show a cameo bust of Warren Hastings, delicately

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carved and set. Surrounding herself with mementoes of her lost love she made of Daylesford a veritable museum of Hastings' relics ; his miniature, set in diamonds, hung beside her bed, where she could look upon it each morning on waking, and, but for her strong common-sense, she might now have sunk into a morbid and introspective state of mind. The tendency to self pity which had showed itself in her middle life placed her in danger.

Her first grief subdued, however, Marian was ready to adopt the suggestion of her friends, and return to the social round. A philosophic woman as well as a brave one, she realised that yet another crisis had to be faced. If at this period she withdrew herself from the world and remained in seclusion to brood upon her sorrow there would be no return. Henceforth, life might go with a limp, but she would be a courageous cripple.

The furiously hot summer of 1820 found her in London. She was at the King's birthday drawing-room, which he held at Buckingham Palace in July, before retiring to Royal Lodge to brood upon his matrimonial troubles, the clouds of which hovered over the prospective Coronation. Not only London, but the whole of England buzzed with gossip that sultry summer ; for Queen Caroline, fat, defiant and over-dressed, had arrived in England, and the Whigs and Tories were fighting over the proposed Divorce Bill. An echo of the past came to Marian in the news that the Queen was staying with the widow of Sir Philip Francis at

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her house in St. James's Square. Always a supporter of the genial emotional man who was still, to her, "the dear Prince," she was distressed at the troubles of "our gracious Majesty." It hurt her sense of fitness that the populace should be so changed, so lacking in respect to their King or his Lords. It was not long since the Dukes of York and Wellington had been grossly insulted by the mob when on their way to visit the Lord Mayor . . . angry faces and loud hostile voices seemed to be everywhere. . . .

Conversation had lost the lightness and wit to which Marian had been accustomed. People now grew heated on such serious subjects as the Corn Laws, the poverty of the people . . . unemployment. Strikes were common, and Marian found it difficult to understand why men who had been given work refused to do it. She was essentially a woman of the eighteenth century, with the limitations of her kind, and it seemed to her, at times, that she had outlived her day. Rumours affected her little . . . talk of revolution did not alarm her. She said, frankly, that the press was too pessimistic. "Editors . . . are apt to exaggerate trifling misfortunes," she thought. She could not agree with Marian Barton who, affected by the restlessness of the times, wished her loved ones in any country but England. Marian Hastings' belief in England remained firm, but she still looked to the East as the land of fortune. She expressed as much to Sir Charles D'Oyly, hoping to have the happiness of seeing him return with Indian wealth "which

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seems too necessary a thing to be omitted in our worldly considerations."

She was vigorous and emphatic in her convictions ; still, to Hastings' friends, what John Palmer called a "wondrous person." Such compliments soothed the vanity that even age could not entirely subdue.

After the heat and the dissipations of London Marian was glad to be back in the peace of Daylesford, although every corner spoke of a lost presence. Here, she was not completely alone, for Marie, the youngest of the three Chapuset girls, had come over from Germany to live with her. Rosalie, who had succeeded Louisa, had returned to Germany and married Count Julius von Soden. She continued to write long affectionate letters to her "sweet aunt," as all the girls called Marian. Marian was, indeed, surrounded with many of the old affections. A letter came from "Melian Showers" beginning "My beloved dearest Mrs. Hastings," and expressing deep gratitude for many benefits conferred.

Melian was another echo from Marian's past ; for their friendship had begun in Madras, when Melian Dare was the survivor of a wreck in which her husband was drowned. She also was a victim of Marian's early habit of match-making, for the young Mrs. Imhoff had pitied the forlorn plight of the widow and had arranged a match for her with a Captain Showers in the Company's Army. It was a miserable marriage, for Showers was a violent man from whom she separated after "shocking recriminations" and scenes in public. Warren

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Hastings managed, after much endeavour, to secure the poor woman a pension from the Company.

But not all Marian's correspondence was so gratifying or so generous. It was an age in which the writing of begging letters had been brought to a fine but shameless art. And now Marian was to find that her own grandson, the youngest of Julius' sons, was added to the writers. An elaborately expressed and grovelling epistle, signed "John Fitz Julius," arrived one day to disturb her mind. Although the tone of this letter was subservient it concluded with something like a threat in the suggestion that "your Ladyship" would "relieve a grandson from the disagreeable consequences of misery and famine."

Marian, always practical and not easily deceived, wrote to John Palmer, executor of Julius Imhoff's will, and son of the Major Palmer who had been Hastings' secretary at the time of his duel with Francis. His answer, written from Calcutta, revealed the unpleasing fact that Julius' sons had followed in the Chapuset tradition of weakness and instability of character. William, he said, had been idle, rebellious and intemperate, causing Palmer much trouble and anxiety by his constant demands for money. He was now dead, having died in September, 1818. John was "beyond control," and had chosen his own way, "a path of useless independence, doing nothing, but not, so far as I can learn, of very expensive habits, but is living on the interest of his personal property. I am

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expecting, however, that he will, sooner or later, demand surrender of the real estate."

Julius Imhoff had not left his family in poverty, his personal estate being valued at a little under a lac of rupees, with a house at Alipore estimated at thirty thousand rupees. John, the youngest son, would inherit this, as the elder child, Charles, had been drowned with his ayah in a well at Alipore at the age of five. His plea of beggary was, therefore, a mere piece of impudence. He was the only one of the three sons who lived to be legitimatised by Royal Letter, and take on his father's name. His end is obscure. Some say that he was murdered in his father's house at Alipore, while others contend that he became a wanderer through India, lived to a dishonoured old age and was buried in a pauper's grave at Karachi in 1854. The latter theory is the more tenable, as he seems, from his earliest years, to have displayed that impatience of restraint and waywardness of temper which marks the wanderer.

As the years went by, Marian's financial difficulties increased. In the year 1825 she was oppressed by the fear that she might be compelled to let her dear Daylesford. But, as Nesbitt Thompson had once remarked, as his family increased, "one can but rely upon the Bounty of Providence, which feeds the Ravens." Providence helped Marian in a totally unexpected manner, by the hand of one F. Redfearn, who wrote from Northallerton. He recalled himself to the memory of Mrs. Hastings whom he had met at Bath with Mrs. Sands, and

“prompted by the gratitude I owe to Mr. Hastings, the great respect I bear to his memory and the knowledge of how earnestly he always strove to promote your comfort and happiness,” begged her acceptance of the small sum of five hundred pounds, as he feared that the “cruel prosecution” must have left her with little money.

Such an unsolicited gift could not but be welcome to Marian ; apart from the fact that it relieved her from the necessity of letting Daylesford it constituted a testimonial to her beloved husband’s memory. “I can assure you, dear sir, that in accepting your proffered gift I am relieved of a great deal of trouble, and shall be able to keep on this sweet place, so valued for the attachment which my sainted husband bore to it.”

Providence was active in care for Marian in that year ; for the Dutch firm in which she had invested—and lost—over £62,000 paid a last dividend which amounted to about £450, and must have been extremely welcome. But, although she clung bravely to Daylesford, she was soon in deep waters again. In 1829 she was, with the help and advice of the Princess Sophia, petitioning the King for a Civil List pension.

She had, she said, struggled for ten years to maintain the station becoming the widow of Warren Hastings. “To support this station I have, at different times, parted with all that was valuable in my possession. This source, alas, is exhausted ! This estate is burthened with a mortgage of £600 . . . the rental of estate is £600, which covers only

the expenditure of it. . . . My own income is £1000 per annum. . . .”

Sophia, through whom she had intended to send the petition, wrote long and affectionate letters of advice, but suggested that it would be best to approach the King direct as “I have so often heard the King speak of you in the kindest terms . . . and the respect he bears you. . . .” She then suggests that the appeal might be presented through the Marquis of Conyngham, “who is always with the King !” He was, indeed, as was his wife, for whom George IV cherished an autumn passion. But these letters passed between the ladies in the late months of 1829 and the King was already a very sick man, tired and uninterested in everyone but the Conynghams. It is therefore likely that the appeal, if made, never reached him ; at all events Marian did not receive her pension.

By the middle of the following year the King was dead. To Marian his death was the passing of an epoch. So well she remembered him, gay and gallant, with his scented curls and his waisted coats, part of a life that had gone from her. The Brighton scene flashed before her, with that glimpse that she had had of Emma Hamilton, blowsy and destitute, hobbling along the Steyne in her last effort to attract attention before she went to die in that refuge of life’s derelicts, Calais.

Suddenly, Marian realised that she too was old. It was incredible that she had once shaken her curls in the face of St. James’s, gay and defiant. Looking about her, Marian realised that Charles,

her son, was now middle-aged, and that there was grey on Charlotte's dear head. A sense of hurry shook her ; time was growing short, and there was still so much to be done. In that year she made her will, and it may be that it was at this time that she destroyed all her own earlier letters, those written to her husband on her last voyage to England, and the others sent to him at Benares, which he had treasured in a case especially made for the purpose. One may be certain that it was not Hastings' own hand which destroyed these treasures.

It might appear a want of logic that Marian, while destroying her own letters to Hastings, should have presented posterity with the love-letters he had written to her. She had always insisted that her letters should be seen by no eyes but his. But now that those eyes were closed forever, her written words had no further value. Not so his letters ! Even in extreme old age a woman does not willingly destroy the evidence that she once was beautiful and desirable. Here, indeed, is her consolation for the loneliness, the dead dreams, the advance of the pitiless years.

The years, the inexorable years, were passing. On her now rare visits to London Marian's shrewd eyes detected the changes which were sweeping over social England. As her own pulses beat slower she realised that the world moved to a faster tune. The great god Steam was revolutionising England, transforming an agricultural country into a vast industrial area. . . . Looms were humming, machines were replacing handcraft . . . roads

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were opening out, and in the North a steam engine had actually drawn passenger carriages at the rate of sixteen miles an hour.

But apart from these inventions, which scarcely touched the quiet retreat of Daylesford, Marian, acutely sensitive to atmosphere, saw the changing and merging of social values. If the retired Indian "nabobs" had irritated society in former days, they and their descendants were now presented with their chance to criticise the newly-rich industrial magnates and their relatives. The old careless, spendthrift nobility seemed sunk before a generation more opulent but less open handed. Sudden riches were tossed into the social scale, elevating their possessors to a position for which they were otherwise ill equipped. An undercurrent of discontent ran beneath the apparent prosperity . . . the word Democracy had assumed a new meaning ; it was now a Force, not merely the shibboleth of politicians.

Workers were demanding *rights*. Marian, dispensing comforts and benefits to her villagers, had never thought of the rights of the people. To her mind it was all very simple. If you had plenty you gave to those who had little, and who were, in a sense, dependent upon your bounty. But it was *bounty*, and not a right. Her charities were many. In the course of her career she had performed many acts of disinterested kindness. Now she comforted herself and others with a generous sympathy. "Madame Hastings," as she was affectionately known to the villagers, never lost the practical

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wisdom she had accumulated through many painful vicissitudes.

As the years took toll of her physical strength, the spiritual life came closer to her. Never without faith, she had been typical of the day in her easy-going attitude towards religion. The Almighty was frequently invoked—"God bless you, my children" . . . "God be thanked for His mercies." Such phrases entered largely into most correspondence of the time. But the words were empty, a convention. Now something of her beloved husband's simple faith entered into her heart. The prayer he had composed for their daily use took on a new and deeper meaning ; it was his message to her, personally. But her beliefs were in no sense emotional. With Marian, this religious feeling was but the logical development of a healthy lifelong philosophy. It was ethical rather than theological, and found its finest expression in kindness to others. Her letters in the later years grew a trifle garrulous in their piety, although they retained their old vigour of expression.

* * *

Marian was growing tired. There were mornings when she felt unwilling to rise and face the day and the empty place at her table. Time had not killed her sense of desolation ; it lay there stifled but alive. As the years passed and the sadness of age crept upon her, the outline of the present grew a trifle blurred, and she found it easier to recall the past. Figures from the old days came before her,

vivid and sharply cut . . . life, indeed, seemed to be all echoes. Looking out from the wide windows of her boudoir, which she now preferred to call her "study," she saw, not the trees and lawns of Daylesford, but vignettes of the past . . . people dancing in a ball-room with the doors open to the Indian night. . . . Mr. Francis in his fine coat bending to smile on a pretty girl, and someone—who was it?—wearing a preposterous hoop. Women did not wear hoops now; gowns were straight and slim . . . too slim and too straight. The ill-fated Josephine had brought these into the mode. Marian had always aimed at individuality in her own dress; even Fanny Burney had said of her that she made everybody else look under-dressed by comparison.

Mary Impey . . . "dear friend," what had they quarrelled about so long ago? She had forgotten, but how foolish they had been then, young women, both with their silly rivalries and jealousies. . . . Mary Impey was dead now; she had died early in the year that saw Hastings' end. Philip Francis, their arch-enemy, had gone in that year also, out-living her beloved Hastings by a few months. How handsome and debonair he had been; his persuasive manners had almost confounded her judgment, little as she had liked him. There had been a great deal of talk about him of late years, people disputing as to whether he had written the *Junius* letters. Even her gentle Hastings had hated him, but he did not believe him to be the author. For herself she regarded Francis as having been

capable of any villainy ; but hate had no place in her life now.

With the mellowed vision of age she looked back to those troubled days in Calcutta, and thought how little it all mattered in the end. The angry passions of men, spite and calumny and dissension ; they had seemed great and important then. Now they faded to something seen in a dream. Those men who had striven for place and honour, what did their hopes and ambitions, their jealousies and disputes, amount to now that the years had settled all disputes and calmed all passions ?

Sir Elijah Impey had had his enemies, but he had taken life more philosophically than her beloved husband, and it had all come to nothing. He had gone years ago—she had forgotten how many. She had liked him—a warm-hearted, if commonplace man, and her sincere admirer. He had failed sooner than her dear Hastings. . . .

Yet, although her thoughts wandered into the past, Marian's mind was still alert. There is a letter from the Duke of Gloucester, written in October, 1831, in which he thanks Mrs. Hastings for her very kind letter, and begs her acceptance of some game from Bagshot Park. He adds that owing to attendance at the Coronation and the House of Lords, he had not been at home so much as usual, but is going to Brighton on Friday. Brighton ! What memories centred there ; she could see the motley crowd on the Steyne, and sniff the salt breeze. . . . The Pavilion and the Prince . . . how handsome he had been, and how kind,

although people said monstrous things about him . . . dead, a sailor King on the Throne and a round-faced blue-eyed little girl living in great simplicity at Kensington Palace, being educated for queenship should no heir appear.

Marian was past eighty . . . eighty-three. . . . She felt that the making of her will could no longer be delayed. It was not an easy task, but Marian brought zest to it. The enumeration of her possessions was a matter for thought and care. She enjoyed reviewing them. That was a spacious age ; possessions were of supreme importance, and Marian had always had a well-developed acquisitive sense. She was surrounded with precious objects, her room almost overfull with ornaments in which she took pride, cherished both for their beauty and the memories they evoked. Here was the little blue work-box that Mary Mott had given her . . . dear "Bibby," as they had called her, so old and close a friend. Hastings had loved her too. "I have always a little love for her ; it would be called a great one were not yours too near it to lessen it by comparison," he had written to her once. She smiled, recalling the words. Charlotte should have the work-box, as well as the Sèvres box with a parrot painted on the lid and silver drops hung round it. An ivory writing-case, the Indian shawl which Marian Barton had given her, and the ivory plaques set with diamonds, all these for dear Charlotte. They must all be remembered individually. Marie Chapuset, so kind and faithful and her closest companion now that she was old,

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and Rosalie, married, living in Germany; she should have the silver tea-service and the muffineers, as well as a substantial legacy.

Mrs. Halhed . . . now a widow like herself. Many gay and amusing letters had passed between them when the Halheds lived in Pall Mall, and Halhed had written that he would like to live to see what a "divine old man" Hastings would be at eighty-six. He had that satisfaction, and now was dead. His had been a hard struggle for existence, poor man, but they had always tried to help him. . . . To her dear friend, Mrs. Halhed, should go the white Indian shawl that she had admired . . . and Charlotte should have the other shawl which Marian Barton had presented to her. Poor Marian: she had married unhappily and Julius had loved her . . . but that was a long time ago . . . she could still feel the clinging arms of the child who had lamented her "dear, dear Papa and Mama." A last lingering regret smote her, that she had no child of Charles and Charlotte to include in her will. Lacking direct descendants these precious possessions must be scattered. Friends would die, their children would not cherish these things for the sake of an unknown woman. But God had been good, and had helped her to bear her many disappointments.

Marian's will was a thoughtful and a lengthy document. She had loved abundantly, and she now endeavoured to enshrine her memory in the hearts of those she had loved. She commenced with devout thanks to the Almighty for granting

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her the strength of will to dispose of her affairs, and expressed her wish to lie beside her beloved husband in the vault at Daylesford churchyard, from whence, she trusted, they would "rise together to that blessed abode which God, in His infinite mercy, has promised to those who do His will."

Apparently it did not enter into Marian's consciousness that the family estate which Hastings had bought and restored might reasonably be expected to revert to the family. Although no Hastings' descendants were left, the Woodmans had a certain moral claim to the property. But Marian seems to have ignored this, and concentrated on the fact that her son Charles had been as closely allied by affection to Hastings as though he had been his own son.

To her beloved son, Charles Imhoff, she left the estate of Daylesford, with the rents and profits arising therefrom. If he did not wish to reside there the house was to be left with all furniture disposed exactly as it had been in her husband's lifetime. From her own personal property she left legacies to all and each of her nephews and nieces, and to her dear daughter-in-law, Charlotte, Lady Imhoff.

Charlotte was to have the "blue work-box which I have valued as being the gift of my beloved friend, Mrs. Motte." There was also "the painting of my late beloved husband set round with diamonds to my son Charles Imhoff during his lifetime, and after that to Mrs. Marian Barton and her daughter Marian." Her wearing apparel, apart from her jewellery, was to be divided between

Charlotte Imhoff, Louisa Woodman and Marie Chapuset. "The few remaining jewels that I possess" were to be sold, and the proceeds incorporated in her personal estate.

"The few remaining jewels!" The last glittering baubles of the many with which she had once, in her pride and arrogance, loved to adorn herself. They were trifles, things of no importance, for the real jewels of her life had been the love and admiration of husband and friends. These were the gems which endured.

To Louisa's son, Warren Hastings Woodman, she gave "the gold watch which was my blessed Mr. Hastings' constant companion for many years, not to be given to him until he reaches the age of twenty, Sir Charles Imhoff will take care of it till then." None of her retainers were forgotten. To her devoted servants, Samuel and Susan Dadge, she left a substantial legacy; the sum of one pound to every person in the parish of Daylesford, and the same to each child, to be kept by their parents until they were of age, or used for their benefit.

Careful detail of every relic was given, with instructions as to where they were to be found—the vases, the boxes, the shawls. Marian's will was expressive of her whole life, careful, conscientious and kind.

Marian had been intensely, and justly, proud of her continued but respectful intimacy with the Royal Family. From the first Queen Charlotte and her daughters had been pleased to honour the

charmingly deferential Mrs. Hastings, and Marian was grateful for, as well as flattered by, their attentions. A clause in her will refers to the Royal portraits which were some of her most treasured possessions :

“ Upon the death of my son, Sir Charles Imhoff, it is my particular desire that the likeness of the late King and Queen presented to me by her late Majesty Queen Charlotte, together with the portrait of Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Gloucester, be presented by my trustees, together with the portrait of His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester, to Her Royal Highness Princess Sophia.”

The last and most touching injunction in the will is simply worded :

“ I particularly desire that my burial shall not take place until ten days after my demise, that it shall be conducted very privately, and that *no man* shall touch my body.”

The words “ no man ” are emphasized.

Her body, which had been so beautiful, which she had so loved to adorn, now withered with the years, was, even in death, sacred to the one man she had loved with a deathless devotion.

The will is dated March 29th, 1830. That was a long and a bitterly cold winter, “ the most tedious, the most unpleasant and the most unhealthy one I almost ever recollect,” wrote the Duke of Gloucester. Marian was now eighty-three, yet she was to survive many winters to come. Her health had been one of her husband’s most constant anxieties. In many of his letters he refers to her delicate constitution as being the one stumbling block to his

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complete happiness. "Your tender frame . . . " he wrote to her. And to others—"If only Mrs. Hastings' health were better. . . ." Yet this was the woman who assumed the control of an estate and rode about it in all weathers, who could even in late middle age enjoy entertainments of the most strenuous description, and who lived to complete her ninetieth year.

One is forced to the conclusion that Warren Hastings, like many men of forceful character, *preferred* to regard his adored wife as a frail flower, to be enshrined, adorned and shielded from the winds of Fate. But Marian was no delicate blossom likely to be withered in the storm. From such of her correspondence as has been preserved, it is evident that Marian had both individuality and strength of mind. Her frequent references to ill-health may be passed over as a concession to the mode of the day, fragility of constitution being regarded as part of the make-up of a woman of fashion. But she was physically as well as mentally robust.

Although the years took inevitable toll of Marian's bodily strength her mind retained to the last much of its former vigour. In the early months of 1836, when she was within sight of her eighty-ninth birthday, she was assisting Charles to collect her beloved husband's letters with a view to their publication by the Rev. G. H. Gleig. Charles Imhoff would have preferred that a son of Sir Elijah Impey should write the biography of his step-father, but Mr. Gleig was enthusiastic and sympathetic, and the other project was abandoned. At this distance one

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can but conjecture the effect upon posterity of this decision. Would a biography by Mr. Impey have inspired the facile pen of Thomas Babington Macaulay to "meet the wishes" of his readers by "an attempt to give, in a way necessarily hasty and imperfect, our own view of the life and character of Mr. Hastings?" And one is driven also to wonder whether if this brilliant writer, whose personal qualities of loyalty, generosity and courage matched those of his unhappy victim, could have foreseen the far-reaching effects of his burning sentences, he would not have stayed his hand.

The planning of this tribute to her husband's memory was Marian's last effort. Her health was steadily declining, and Charles and Charlotte found it necessary to be almost constantly with her, although Charles was disinclined to take up residence at Daylesford. He was comfortable in his house in Portugal Street, and one must make allowance for the reluctance of an elderly man. For the once dashing, but dutiful Charles was now close on seventy. An imperturbable man; Hastings used to view with some amusement what he called the composed content of Charles and contrast it with the animated content of his wife. No woman ever had a more devoted son. He was with Marian to the last, ready to do her lightest bidding. But he was a man of the world, his interests centred in the town, and it was not until a year after his mother's death that he consented to retire to the Cotswolds and turn country squire. "So you have turned country squire at last," wrote his friend, Sir

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Charles Hastings, early in 1838. "We shall have you smelling of hay and turnips and talking learnedly of fat sheep. . . . I passed your house the other day and could not think it looked as it ought to do without you . . . it is now cold and uninhabitable . . ."

Charles lived the rest of his long life at Daylesford, dying there in 1853 at the age of eighty-six, and being buried beside his mother. He lost his dear Charlotte nine years earlier ; she is buried at Kensal Green, so presumably she died while on a visit to London.

* * *

Winter ; and the bare branches of the trees outlined against the pale frosty skies. Each winter seemed longer to Marian now, the days shorter, the winds that blew over the wide valleys colder. Each fall of the leaf found her without yet another associate of the past, until she seemed to be left alone in a wintry world. Even her sincere friend and constant correspondent, the Duke of Gloucester, many years younger than herself, had gone now. Knowing that her own days must soon draw to a close her mind filled with anxiety. Although she felt the long winters Time seemed to fly, as it does for the old. It is only for the young that it lingers. Fear touched her ; not fear of the Other Life ; her beliefs were too deeply rooted for such apprehensions, and her body too weary for her to look upon Death as anything but a welcome relief. But she felt that these last days of hers were valuable ; for

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she must set every aspect of her affairs in order. Her thoughts were haunted by the fear that someone deserving of her remembrance had been forgotten. Her mind played round these apprehensions until they assumed a disproportionate importance. Seven years had passed since she had made her will ; some of those mentioned in it had gone before her ; new faces had appeared. She could not bear the thought that any of these should have cause to reproach her memory with lack of consideration and kindness.

Marian sat in her warm room of ivory and gold, the room with the domed roof and the wide windows that commanded a view of the country-side. Looking out with dim eyes she watched a gardener raking the withered leaves from the lawn . . . and she remembered. . . . Impulsive as in her youth she called Marie to her. Charles must be sent for, and a lawyer, for there was something to be done, and the time grew short.

Marian dictated a codicil to her will. In it she left forty pounds to each of the brothers Bowler, neighbours who had helped her in the administration of her estate, and twenty pounds to her gardener, Joseph Cook. With her family around her she signed this with her old bold signature "A. M. Hastings," and added : "This wish my beloved son, Charles Imhoff, will fulfil. God bless him."

This was signed on March 15th, 1837. Five days later Marian was dead.

* * *

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A hundred years have passed since all that was mortal of Marian Hastings was laid beside her husband in the little churchyard of Daylesford. The verdict of history is frequently accidental and Marian, like many others, has been dismissed in a few careless phrases. Dull wives have often climbed into notice on the shoulders of their dull but more distinguished husbands ; but Macaulay, deriving his scandal from Gleig, snubbed Marian into a century of obscurity. Yet few women have exerted more influence over their husbands than did this German-born divorcee. To her Warren Hastings owed much of the serenity of mind which enabled him to endure almost intolerable blows of fate.

Domesticated yet never dull, shrewd but not crafty, generous but clear-sighted, she made of her marriage a career without sinking her individuality. Philip Francis might truly, if cynically, say of her that "she married the Governor, not the man," yet none knew better than he how magnificently she had played her supporting rôle.

Historians and biographers will long take sides in assessing the worth of Warren Hastings. His true character may, perhaps, be best expressed in Browning's lines :

" One who never turned his back, but marched breast forward
Never doubted clouds would break ;
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better—
Sleep to wake."

This verse may equally serve as epitaph for his

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